

Newsletter 25 June

Changes in criteria for COVID-19 testing

With the announcement that Grade Rs will return to school on 6 July, we needed to vacate our temporary Greens'cool premises. I am pleased to report that we have now moved into the West Campus Building at Mutualpark, and are working from the gym area. Access is from the Old Mutual delivery parking area, and signage indicating the route via the Greens'cool is in place. All Covid safety protocols are in place.

The recent exponential increase in the number of cases of COVID -19 in the Western Cape has resulted in large backlogs in testing, and the turn-around time has been as long as 13 days. In order to ensure that the sickest members of our community have access to testing, the requirements to be tested at a State facility are as follows:

Anyone who presents with an acute onset respiratory tract infection, including fever, sore throat, cough, and one of the following:

- has an underlying medical condition, like hypertension & diabetes - will be tested irrespective of age
- is older than 55 years of age
- is a health care worker
- is a patient in hospital with coronavirus symptoms
- lives in a care or old age home

In private facilities the COVID-19 testing is not as limited because you or your medical aid may pay for your test, provided you have symptoms. Asymptomatic persons are not being tested for COVID-19 as there are too many false negative results and this delays more urgent cases getting their results. The most accurate test results are from swabs taken on DAY 3-5 after symptoms.

According to the latest Council for Medical Schemes guidelines RT-PCR testing for COVID-19 is a PMB (Prescribed Medical Benefit) level of care if the member is screened and referred by your doctor. Certain private labs require a booked appointment for testing and others do not. There are also drive-by testing sites so you do not need to leave your vehicle. There is no consistent indication regarding which labs are quicker to get a result from. No private lab will do your test without the correct documentation from your doctor.

If you are unable to isolate at your place of residence, please let me know. There are many isolation facilities available in different areas of the Western Cape to assist.

Once again a reminder that the only way to avoid getting COVID-19 is by stringent washing of hands, wearing of masks and observing social distancing.

Keep well, and stay safe.

Yours in health,



Dr Louise Wiggins