



COVID-19 Omicron Outbreak

To ensure continuity of service during the ongoing COVID pandemic, Pathlab laboratories are again asking that all requestors ensure that they **choose wisely** with test requests. Omicron, as in all industries, is now affecting our staffing levels and by default, our operations.

Choose Wisely

The term 'choose wisely' continues to have a **very** different interpretation so before requesting any laboratory investigation tests, please consider:

- Will this investigation change my patient management?
- Can I leave this investigation for a period of time, with acceptable clinical risk?
- Will this high exposure event subject my patient to an acceptable risk?
- Does this high exposure event subject the front-line staff to an acceptable risk?

These considerations are now even more important with our domiciliary service. Please note our **current domiciliary criteria**: Only immunocompromised, bed bound or incapacitated, dementia or Hospital level patients are eligible for domiciliary visits. Being over 70 is not a criterion, nor is lack of transport.

Rest Homes

- As a rest home facility, are you able to move your patient to an area close to the entrance so that the phlebotomist does not have to move around your facility?
- Pathlab needs to be made aware prior to the visit if the patient currently has a cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat or a suspected COVID infection, as separate PPE will be required for the visit.
- Does this patient really need a home visit / can they attend a collection site under their own steam using the facility's transport?
- Do you have a nurse that is able to collect the sample as Pathlab couriers can collect it from you?
- If it is an INR - for most people once the INR is stable, the rate of INR testing can be extended to two weekly and then four to six-weekly. In some stable patients the frequency may be extended out to eight weeks. However, people with higher levels of risk, e.g. comorbidities, may need more frequent testing.

If you are unable to give a patient a paper request form, please continue to use e-ordering or email the form to requestforms@pathlab.co.nz.

Pathlab will continue to support all our communities, but like most healthcare services at this time, we have limited resource and high risk of loss of service continuity.

**We humbly ask you to again please 'choose wisely'
to ensure the safety of our community.**

Dianne McQueen, Chief Executive

CLINICAL UPDATE

Please ensure all members of your institution receive a copy of this clinical update.

All Clinical Updates are on the Clinician page on our website. www.pathlab.co.nz