

COVID-19 and Cancer Treatment

Michael Rice Centre for Haematology and Oncology

We understand that the past few months have been a worrying time for families with a child or young person having cancer treatment. We want to reassure you that your team are still available when you need us.

All of the social-distancing measures that have been put in place by the Australian Government significantly change the way that we live our lives and we recognise the impact that this will be having on our oncology community.

As we enter the recovery phase of this public health emergency, we thought it was an excellent time to contact you regarding changes within the service.

What to do if your child or young person develops a fever or any other symptoms

You should follow the normal guidance if your child or young person develops a fever. Your child will be assessed and treated as per WCH policy and as per standard protocol.

Please call ahead to inform clinic/ward you are coming to the hospital. In some cases children who have a fever will be instructed to come to the emergency department rather than directly to the clinic.

If you are concerned that your child or young person has symptoms of COVID-19 or has a known COVID-19 contact, it is essential that you inform their clinic immediately.

Emergency entrance

Alternative entry to the paediatric emergency department (PED) is now available via the Ambulance Access doors, which are easily accessible from the Brougham Place entrance. This will allow you to bypass the COVID-19 testing clinic and PED triage/waiting room.

Please note that after 11pm the Brougham Place doors will be locked (as is the Kermode main entrance) and families will need to ring the buzzer.

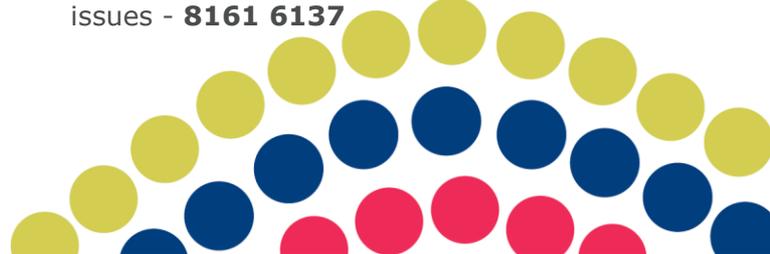
Emergency entrance instructions are as follows:

- Enter the foyer and take the corridor ahead, following the signs to *Women's Assessment*.
- Look out for the double doors on the left that say **Ambulance Access Only**. This is just before Paediatric Emergency triage.
- Press the intercom on the left of the doors to contact a triage nurse - there may be a slight delay depending on activity. If no answer, please call the PED Coordinator Nurse on **8161 6110**.



- A nurse will collect you and take you directly into a room in the department to be seen.
- Please give the triage/STAR Nurse your child or young person's name and explain that they are an oncology patient.

Contact Michael Rice Ward for any further issues - **8161 6137**



School attendance

We now recommend that all children who were well enough to attend school prior to COVID-19 restrictions should now return to school.

This means that almost all children receiving chemotherapy or who have recently completed chemotherapy can now return. Please talk with your doctor about your specific circumstances or concerns.

Our previous recommendation was aligned with our national professional group, *Australian and New Zealand Children's Haematology and Oncology Group* (ANZCHOG). This was to keep children home who were on chemotherapy, within three months of finishing chemotherapy, or six months from a bone marrow transplantation.

ANZCHOG is now recommending a return to school for most patients based on the:

- Declining number of COVID-19 cases
- Lower risk of spread and disease in children; and
- Safe reopening of schools which closed during term one.

For more information, please see the [ANZCHOG website](#).

Blood collections

We are very pleased that SA Pathology has opened three community collection areas with special waiting rooms for people with low immune systems.

Why have blood tests the day before clinic?

If your child or young person is scheduled for a procedure or chemotherapy on Tuesday - Saturday, we kindly request that you have blood tests performed the day before.

Testing is to ensure it is safe to proceed with the scheduled procedure or chemotherapy the following day. We will call you with the results between 4:00pm-5:30pm on the day of your blood test.



For more information

Michael Rice Centre for Haematology and Oncology
Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone (08) 8161 7225



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons

Collection centres are NOT open on Sunday, so any planned treatment on a Monday will still need a blood test performed on Monday morning at WCH.

Where can this happen?

There are four SA Pathology collection centres with special waiting rooms for children or young people with low immune systems.

All four centres can take blood from a vein or by finger prick.

These are:

Women's and Children's Hospital collection centre – 4th floor, Zone B.

Monday-Friday: 8.00am to 5.00pm
Saturday: 8.30am to 11.30am.

Metro Shopping Centre 254 Unley Road, Hyde Park.

Monday-Friday: 7.30am to 4.00pm
Saturday: 8.00am to 12.00pm.

Elizabeth GP Plus 16 Playford Blvd, Elizabeth.

Monday-Friday: 8.00am to 4.00pm

10 Railway Terrace, Mile End

Monday-Friday: 8.00am to 4.00pm

Do I need to book?

Yes, bookings are essential. Please call 8222 3000.

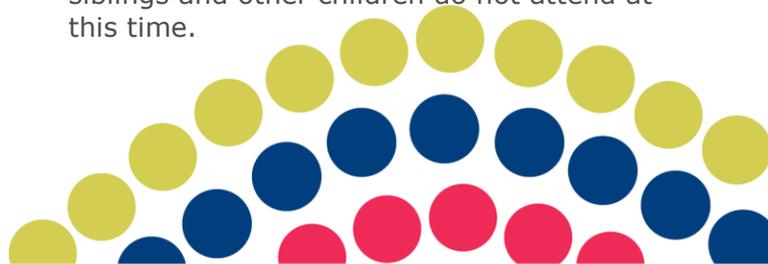
Does it matter what time the blood is taken?

Yes. To have a result by 4pm, the blood needs to be taken early in the day.

WCH – collect by 2:30pm
Unley – collect by 2:00pm
Elizabeth – collect by 11:30am
Mile End – collect by 1:00pm

Visitor restrictions

The WCH is currently restricting visitor numbers. We kindly ask that you limit visitors to two consistent support people, and that siblings and other children do not attend at this time.



Government of South Australia

Women's and Children's Health Network

Visitor restrictions are to protect our patients and staff and are currently in place across all areas of the Women's and Children's Hospital.

We're here to support you

We understand there will be exceptional circumstances and we encourage families to speak with their medical team for further support.

We know these restrictions can be challenging and we understand each family's situation is different.

It is also important that visitors should not be entering the WCH if they are at all unwell.

When you and your child or young person come into clinic or are admitted to the ward, the nominated carers will be given a green arm band by nursing staff which you will be required to wear while your child or young person is in hospital.

Telehealth appointments

We are embracing the use of technology and conducting some, less urgent, follow up appointments via telephone or telehealth video call using Health Direct. Where possible your child will be seen via telehealth to limit the amount of time you're required to be in hospital.

This will reduce the number of people coming into the clinic and the need for trips into hospital for some patients. We will notify you if this is the case for your child or young person's appointment.

COVID-19 and immune suppression medicines

There is currently no evidence from overseas that children or young people taking immunosuppressive medications are at higher risk of becoming very unwell, although this is possible. The issues are similar to the annual wave of flu infections. Currently there is no specific treatment or vaccine for coronavirus.



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The pharmacy department has been looking at its supply chains to ensure a secure supply of necessary drugs. There is an action plan in place to manage the supply of medicines in Australia.

Whilst this situation may change, currently there are no shortages linked to coronavirus and no drug manufacturers have said they expect problems with supply due to coronavirus.

MRCHO outpatients

There have been some changes to the way we are managing the outpatient clinic.

To ensure safe social distancing practices, we ask that you come to clinic at your allocated time. This will enable nursing staff to thoroughly assess your child or young person soon after arrival—before sending them through to the clinic area for treatment—and will reduce the number of people congregating in the waiting room.

The regular theatre list on a Tuesday and Thursday is now happening in the clinic's treatment room rather than theatres or the Medical Day Unit. These procedures, including lumbar punctures and bone marrow biopsies, are being conducted by the paediatric anaesthetic team and our usual medical team.

Flu vaccine

We encourage all patients to get the flu vaccine. This will be available in MRCHO clinic on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays, or you can attend the immunisation clinic on level 1. This is free for patients.

Family members who would like to get it can also receive it at the immunisation clinic; however, a cost will be involved.



Government of South Australia

Women's and Children's
Health Network

Further information

The Women's and Children's Hospital [website](#) has up to date information on COVID-19 management.

Michael Rice Centre for Haematology and Oncology can be contacted on 8161 7225.

Please tell us what you think

As we move into the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeking feedback from consumers to help guide service changes and improvements.

The WCH has developed a [survey](#) for all patients and their families to complete and we highly value your feedback.

Additional feedback

We welcome input on all of the care we provide. Either fill in a feedback card in clinic or on the ward, or talk with any of the clinical team.

You are also welcome to contact the hospital Consumer Feedback Coordinator, Carmella Zeralla:

Phone: 8161 6710 (direct)

Pager: 8161 7000 - ask for pager 4550

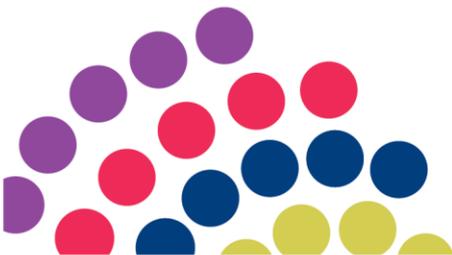
Fax: (08) 8161 6968

Email:

HealthWCHNConsumerFeedback@sa.gov.au

Mail:

Safety and Quality Unit
Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Road
North Adelaide, South Australia 5006

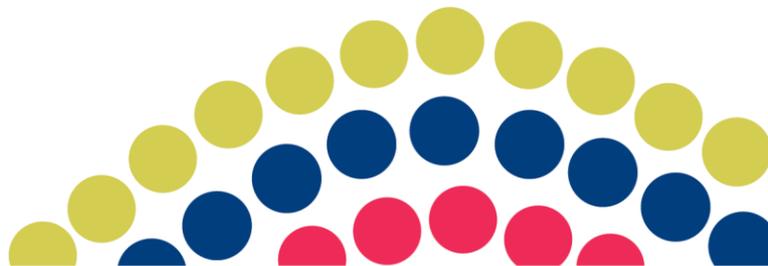


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