

COVID19 – Impacts on VFPMS Services

Changes from 13th May 2020 as VFPMS transitions to “The New Normal”

VFPMS Contact numbers are unchanged. **1300 661 142 remains operational 24/7. No changes have been made to the 24/7 advice and consultation service.**

VFPMS has NOT limited the sites at which forensic examinations of children can occur.

The following changes have occurred in order to comply with directives from government and hospital executives in order to minimise the risk of transmission of COVID19.

The VFPMS initially implemented changes to practice on 8th April 2020 after evaluating available evidence in relation to the known and anticipated risks to our patients, their caregivers, health-care workers, and stakeholders, mindful of the risk of community transmission from unknown sources. The following updated information indicates how the VFPMS is returning to “usual business” in a step-wise fashion, proportionate to the current known community prevalence and risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Hospital’s requirements

Only one adult may accompany a child to a consultation.

No siblings are allowed.

All individuals entering the hospitals will be screened for COVID-19 risk.

VFPMS in-hours services from 13th May 2020

VFPMS sessional staff will work from home some of the time.

VFPMS doctors can come to VFPMS clinics at RCH and MCH during business hours to see children face-to-face when physical examination of the child is required.

Some consultations may occur using telemedicine (video and/or telephone). Telemedicine-consultations will be available during business hours, particularly for children living in regional Victoria and the Greater Melbourne area.

The VFPMS triage process will continue to ensure that the child’s medical and psychological needs are met.

The after-hours VFPMS service has been reduced.

A telephone advice response will be provided between 10pm and 9am the following day. This means that doctors will not leave home after 10pm.

Physically injured children

VFPMS services for inpatients of the Royal Children's Hospital and Monash Children's Hospital will be "business as usual" with use of masks and PPE as indicated on a case-by-case basis in line with hospital requirements.

With regard to outpatients, VFPMS will provide a face-to-face consultation when information gathered at the time of triage indicates that a physical examination of the child and/or medical tests are likely to be required.

When a consultation can safely and adequately be conducted using telehealth (video-consultation or telephone consultation in combination with image interpretation) or via a case-file-review process, then this will be offered as an alternative to a face-to-face consultation.

While the risk of community transmission of COVID-19 persists, VFPMS doctors will wear PPE when examining children's noses or looking in their mouths (because of the risks of COVID19 transmission posed by aerosols/droplets).

SCAN (Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect multidisciplinary, multiagency) meetings and case conferences will be attended via teleconference in preference to face-to-face meetings.

Suspected child sexual abuse

Face-to-face services will be provided during the day and early evening but VFPMS doctors will not leave home after 10pm. Telephone advice will be provided overnight. Children may be seen for examination and sample collection after 9am the following day.

Because COVID-19 has been identified in semen, PPE will be worn (as required according to case during genital examinations and forensic sample collection.

SOCIT police may be encouraged to use Early Evidence Kits to collect samples.

Self-collected or parent-collected buccal swabs may replace physician-collected buccal swabs for reference DNA.

Self-collected ano-genital swabs may be an option for some adolescents under certain circumstances.

Date: 13th May 2020

Director: Anne Smith