

FAQs

1. What is the purpose of the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic?

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic is one of up to 100 clinics being established across the country by the Australian Government.

Identifying suitable sites for these new respiratory Clinics and getting them open as quickly as possible has been a major priority in the battle against COVID-19.

The Clinic will assess people with mild to moderate respiratory symptoms including fever, sore throat, cough, tiredness and shortness of breath. It will assess people for and take specimens for pathology where necessary. Regardless of whether COVID-19 is indicated, or a specimen is taken, the patient will receive clinical guidance about managing their respiratory symptoms.

The Clinic will have the highest standards of infection control and specially designed processes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should a patient present with such condition. These standards have been independently validated by Aspen Medical and a local independent expert on behalf of the Australian Government.

Generally speaking, these standards will exceed what is practically achievable at local general practices.

The Clinic is strongly supported by local GPs, Mona Vale Urgent Care Centre and Northern Beaches Hospital, because it reduces the number of mild respiratory cases that they need to attend to. It will allow them to concentrate on supporting their community with “business as usual” consultations.

The purpose of all the government’s social interventions and medical support, including the provision of the GP-led respiratory clinics, is to reduce the rate of new cases popping up within the community to a manageable level until we have a vaccine. In this way, the most vulnerable Australians will always be comfortably accommodated and managed in our excellent hospitals should they need it.

So far, Australians are doing an excellent job of “flattening the curve” by following social distancing and hygiene principles. The GP-led respiratory clinics will maintain this good trend as we head toward winter ensuring that we will all have the healthcare we need, when we need it.

2. Are these like the COVID-19 Clinics at Hospitals?

No. This is a GP-led respiratory clinic. It is not exclusively for the screening or testing of COVID-19.

3. How will the Dee Why Respiratory Clinic keep our community safe?

The Dee Why GP Clinic will keep you and your family safe by supporting local GPs and hospitals, so that they are able to focus on providing you and your family healthcare without the uncertainty and burden associated with respiratory illnesses.

Many of you will experience respiratory symptoms due to a variety of causes this winter, like any other year. The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic will provide an option for safe assessment in person, allowing for an accurate diagnosis and to develop an appropriate management plan for your regular GP to follow.

Patients of the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic will be managed and assessed in accordance with strict infection control policies and guidelines to reduce risk of transmission between patients, staff and the community.

4. How will patients be managed to minimise crowding near the Clinic or surrounding areas?

The Clinic has put in place check-in arrangements that make it very simple and convenient for patients, while also minimising the time they need to be on site. This includes:

- Requesting patients not to arrive earlier than their appointment time
- Notifying the clinic of their arrival by phone and remaining in their car until instructed to enter by the clinic

When the Clinic is ready, the patient will receive a text or call to tell them to come into the Clinic.

This will minimise the time a patient spends at or near the Clinic.

The Clinic has dedicated waiting rooms and sufficient capacity for patients to wait safely in accordance with social distancing requirements.

Patients will only be seen if they have an appointment.

People hoping for a walk-in appointment will be turned away at the door and asked to make an appointment online at <https://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/dee-why-NSW-2099/dee-why-respiratory-clinic/doctors>

5. Is it safe for me to leave my home if I live in the Osprey building?

Residents of the area are safe to leave their homes and travel subject to [National and NSW Health Guidelines](#). By following these guidelines your risk of spreading or catching COVID-19 is minimised and is no higher than when you travel normally.

Safety to personnel working inside the building is paramount along with the safety of surrounding residents. Based on the infection control measures put in place, surrounding residents are at less risk for infection spread than other general areas of assembly such as supermarkets and shopping centres.

It is worth noting that as at the beginning of April 2020, over 98% of patients in Australia who have met testing criteria (with symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19) and who have been tested, have not had COVID-19. Many patients seen at the Clinic will likely have common cold and flu-like illnesses that would normally be seen at your local general practice.

The Clinic will have the highest standards of infection control and specially designed processes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 should a patient present with such condition. These standards have been independently validated by Aspen Medical and a local infection prevention and control expert on behalf of the Australian Government.

6. Can I get sick if a patient walks through the common foyer area?

There is no increased risk of infection to you or your family if a patient travels through the common areas. The risk of community transmission of respiratory viruses is low if everyone adheres to the [National](#) and [NSW Health Guidelines](#).

7. Can I get sick from shared building ventilation?

There is no increased risk of infection to you or your family as a result of shared ventilation. The risk of community transmission of respiratory viruses is low if everyone adheres to the [National](#) and [NSW Health Guidelines](#).

8. What hours is the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic open?

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic is open 8.00am to 12:00pm Monday to Friday. This will soon increase to 8am – 5pm.

9. Is there a cost to attend the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic?

There is no cost to patients to attend the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic.

10. Do they accept “walk ins”?

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic does not accept walk-ins. Patients will be seen by appointment only.

11. How do I book an appointment?

To book an appointment, please visit <https://www.hotdoc.com.au/medical-centres/dee-why-NSW-2099/dee-why-respiratory-clinic/doctors>

12. Do I need a GP referral?

No. Patients will not need a GP referral and can book directly through the website. However they are strongly encouraged to discuss their symptoms with their GP first via a Telehealth consultation. Many patients will be instructed by their GP to book at the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic and be provided details, but they do not require a formal referral.

13. Will my regular GP be sent my results and kept informed of my consultation/s?

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic will make best endeavours to communicate all patient care with their regular/preferred GP by sharing clinical notes and by phone call where required.

14. Is there security?

There is no security present, but ushers have been employed to assist with flow and direction through the common areas.

15. How will clinic waste be disposed of?

Waste will be removed routinely from the practice daily. Medical waste for the Clinic will be managed internally in line with strict infection control protocols and will be removed by the clinic's usual waste management provider. All waste from the building will be treated as clinical waste.

16. How long will most patients spend at the Clinic?

With pre-appointment telehealth screening and medical history taking, and the streamlined check-in arrangements we have put in place, patients should be inside the Clinic for less than 10 minutes each.

17. How long will this Clinic be open for?

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic is expected to run for 3-6 months commencing in early May 2020. The duration of the Clinic's operations is subject to the Australian Government Department of Health's requirements.

18. How was the decision made to choose the site and the doctors to run this clinic?

The Australian Government's Department of Health is rolling out up to 100 of these clinics throughout Australia. This [Fact Sheet](#) provides the background.

The Department of Health asked the Primary Health Networks nationally to work with their Local Hospital Districts to identify the most appropriate general locations for the clinics. The Primary Health Networks circulated an Expression of Interest (EOI) to general practices in the relevant areas. Collectively, the 31 Primary Health Networks have reach to every General Practice in Australia.

The PHNs are the best placed organisations to understand the requirements of local general practitioners for their patients, and regularly engage with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP). They play a strong role in providing support to General Practice including training and quality improvement, on behalf of the Australian Government. They also play important roles in health system coordination and integration at regional level, and in commissioning health care services.

Applications for these 100 Respiratory Clinics around Australia are made to the Department of Health via the PHN, followed by site visits by Aspen Medical to determine the suitability of the site, based on pre-defined criteria.

There are many checks and balances involved. After the PHN's and Aspen's initial recommendation, the Department of Health enters into a contract directly with the practice. As part of the conditions of that contract, Aspen Medical is required to perform a full review of infection prevention and control protocols at the site and ensure staff at the site are fully trained in these protocols before the site can commence operation. An independent infection prevention and control expert has also been engaged to provide ongoing advice.

The Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic responded to the EOI in mid-March. We have gone through all these processes thoroughly and professionally. We have received very positive feedback that the Dee Why GP Respiratory Clinic has met the highest standards throughout this process.