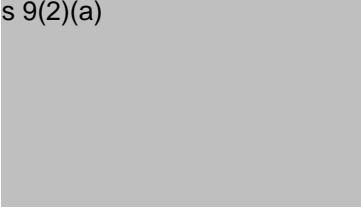


06 April 2023

s 9(2)(a)



Your Official Information Act request, reference: NZ00014726

Thank you for your email 23 March asking for the following which has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

I would like to lodge an official information request to get a copy of the (1) Rat testing Policy / procedure prior to surgery and (2) policy to turn away acute patients referred by Middlemore that refuse rat test at Manukau Super Clinic.

Te Whatu Ora – Counties Manukau District Response:

For context the Counties Manukau District (Te Whatu Ora – Counties Manukau District) employs over 8,500 staff and provides health and support services to people living in the Counties Manukau region (approx. 601,490 people). We see over 118,000 people in our Emergency Department each year, over 490,000 outpatient appointments each year, and over 2,000 visitors come through Middlemore Hospital daily.

Our services are delivered via hospital, outpatient, ambulatory and community-based models of care. We provide national, regional and supra-regional specialist services i.e. for orthopaedics, plastics, burns and spinal services. There are also several specialist services provided including tertiary surgical services, medical services, mental health and addiction services.

In response to your more specific question:

Attached as requested is a PDF copy of the COVID-19 Pre-operative testing policy. This policy is for patients at both Middlemore Hospital and Manukau Surgery Centre.

In regards to your second request you will find this process on page 4 of the policy.

How to get in contact

If you have any questions, you can contact us at hnzOIA@health.govt.nz.

If you are not happy with this response, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman.

Information about how to do this is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or by phoning 0800 802 602.

As this information may be of interest to other members of the public, Te Whatu Ora may proactively release a copy of this response on our website. All requester data, including your name and contact details, will be removed prior to release. The released response will be made available on our website.

Naaku iti noa, naa



Dr Vanessa Thornton

Interim District Director - Counties Manukau

Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand

[TeWhatuOra.govt.nz](https://www.tewhatuora.govt.nz)

Te Whatu Ora, PO Box 793,
Wellington 6140, New Zealand

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Policy: Pre-Operative Testing for COVID-19

Background/ Overview

New Zealand is experiencing an escalation of positive COVID-19 case numbers that is overwhelming laboratory testing capacity with a consequential delay in processing and reporting. Laboratory COVID-19 testing capacity is being prioritised for patients with suspected COVID-19. Surveillance PCR testing in the community is therefore stopped.

Under the COVID-19 Red traffic light phase 2 setting, the use of rapid antigen tests is expanded to reduce the pressure on the laboratory system and allow critical workers to return to work as soon as possible after a potential exposure or infection. The use of PCR testing for surveillance and screening purposes is to be minimised.

The transmissibility of Omicron and suspected high prevalence means COVID-19 screening of patients going to theatre is an important tool in keeping patients and staff safe. This policy outlines how RAT tests will be used for pre-operative screening of patients going to theatre.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to test patients for COVID-19 infection prior to a medical or surgical procedure in an operating theatre at a Counties Manukau Health facility



Note: This procedure must be read in conjunction with the *Surgical Management Guideline for Operating Post Recovery from COVID-19 Infection* and [Guideline: Omicron Testing Strategy Phase 2](#)



Important:

This policy does not apply to DHB patients referred to private providers for a procedure or where a facility is leased by the DHB. The policy of the private provider will apply.



Important updates:

This is a living document and as such will continue to be updated with changes as the COVID-19 situation develops and new evidence or processes come to light.

Scope of Use

This policy is applicable to all acute and planned (elective) patients undergoing a procedure in an operating theatre located in a CM Health facility.

Document ID:	A1584894	CMH Revision No:	1.0
Service:	Operating Theatres	Last Review Date :	22/03/2022
Document Owner:	Clinical Director - Surgery, Anaesthesia and Perioperative Services	Next Review Date:	22/03/2025
Authoriser:	Clinical Director - Surgery, Anaesthesia and Perioperative Services	Date First Issued:	22/03/2022

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Policy

The intent of the policy is to ensure:

- The COVID-19 status of a patient going to theatre is known
- All patients admitted to a ward have a PCR test except those with a positive RAT.
- All RAT positive tests do NOT need to be confirmed with a PCR test.
- All RAT tests conducted by CM Health with results are recorded in the patient record.

Acute patients

1. Patients admitted through the Emergency Department will have a rapid PCR test plus symptomatic patients will also have a RAT test.
2. If not, the appropriate tests are to be done on arrival into the ward.
3. Where there is a delay in surgery, COVID testing does not need to be repeated except where clinically indicated.

Planned (elective) patients

1. Patients who are pre-admitted to a ward for a planned procedure are to have a RAT and if negative, a rapid PCR test (Middlemore Hospital and Manukau Health Park). The RAT is to assist clinical decision making without waiting for the rapid PCR result.
2. Patients admitted through pre-op/TADU will have a RAT test in those locations. This applies to all minor procedures and day cases. Patients who test negative AND are admitted to a ward will have a rapid PCR test (Middlemore Hospital) or routine PCR (Manukau Health Park) in TADU/pre-op.
3. A rapid PCR on a RAT negative day case is NOT required.
4. Patients given leave from the hospital should be retested on return. The testing regime is subject to the leave duration. Patients on home leave for 24 hours or more are expected to recommence the process described in 1 above.

Positive RAT tests

1. All RAT positive tests should be treated as positive and do not need to be confirmed with a PCR test.

RAT tests completed outside of CM Health

1. RAT tests not done by a health provider are to be repeated.
2. Clinical judgement should be used in accepting a RAT test completed by an external health provider e.g. aged residential care.

Testing of COVID recovered patients

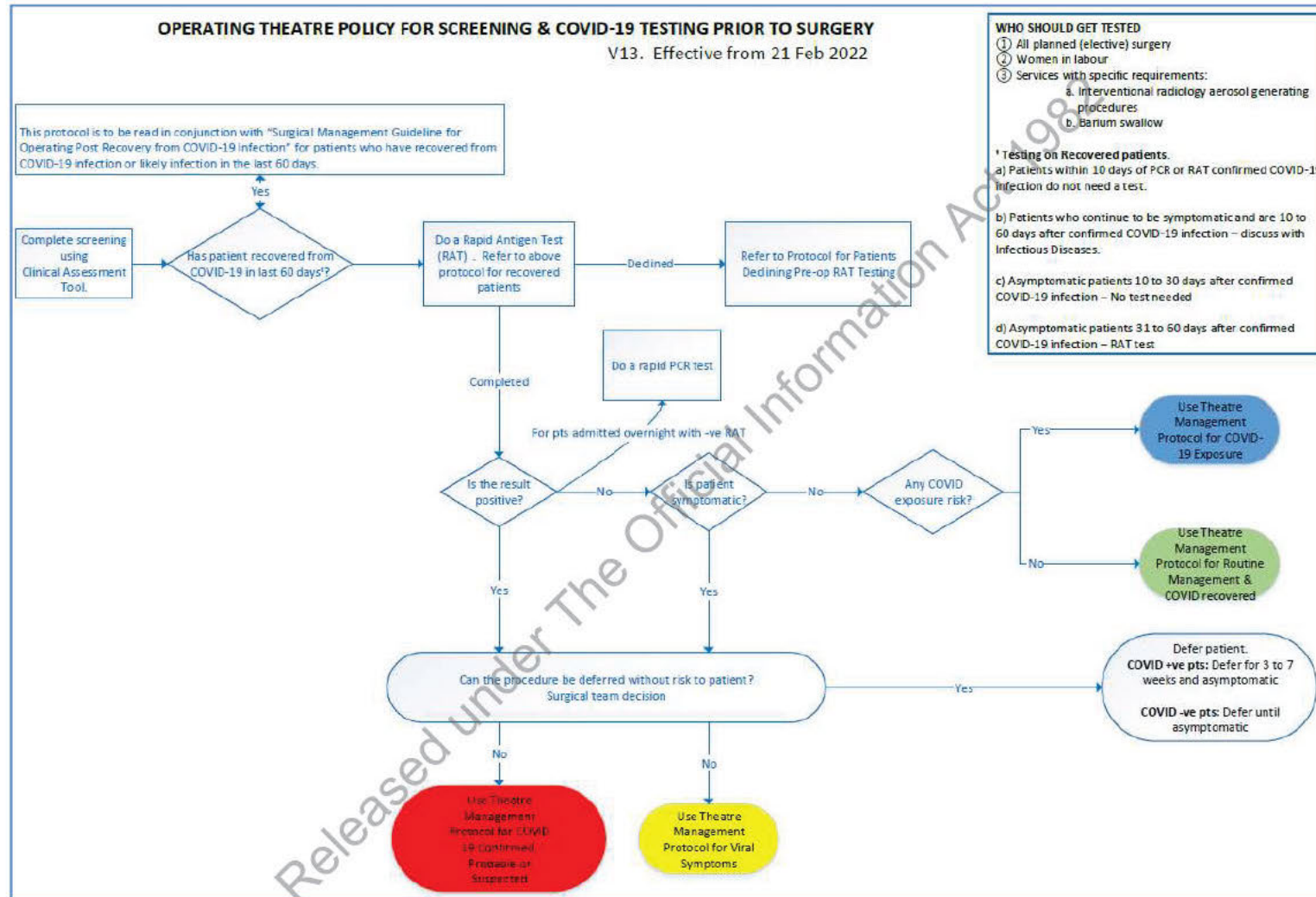
Refer to the Surgical Management Guideline for Operating Post Recovery from COVID-19 Infection.

This guideline describes the period of infectiousness post infection and the changing need for COVID-19 testing depending on symptomatology and the duration after a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

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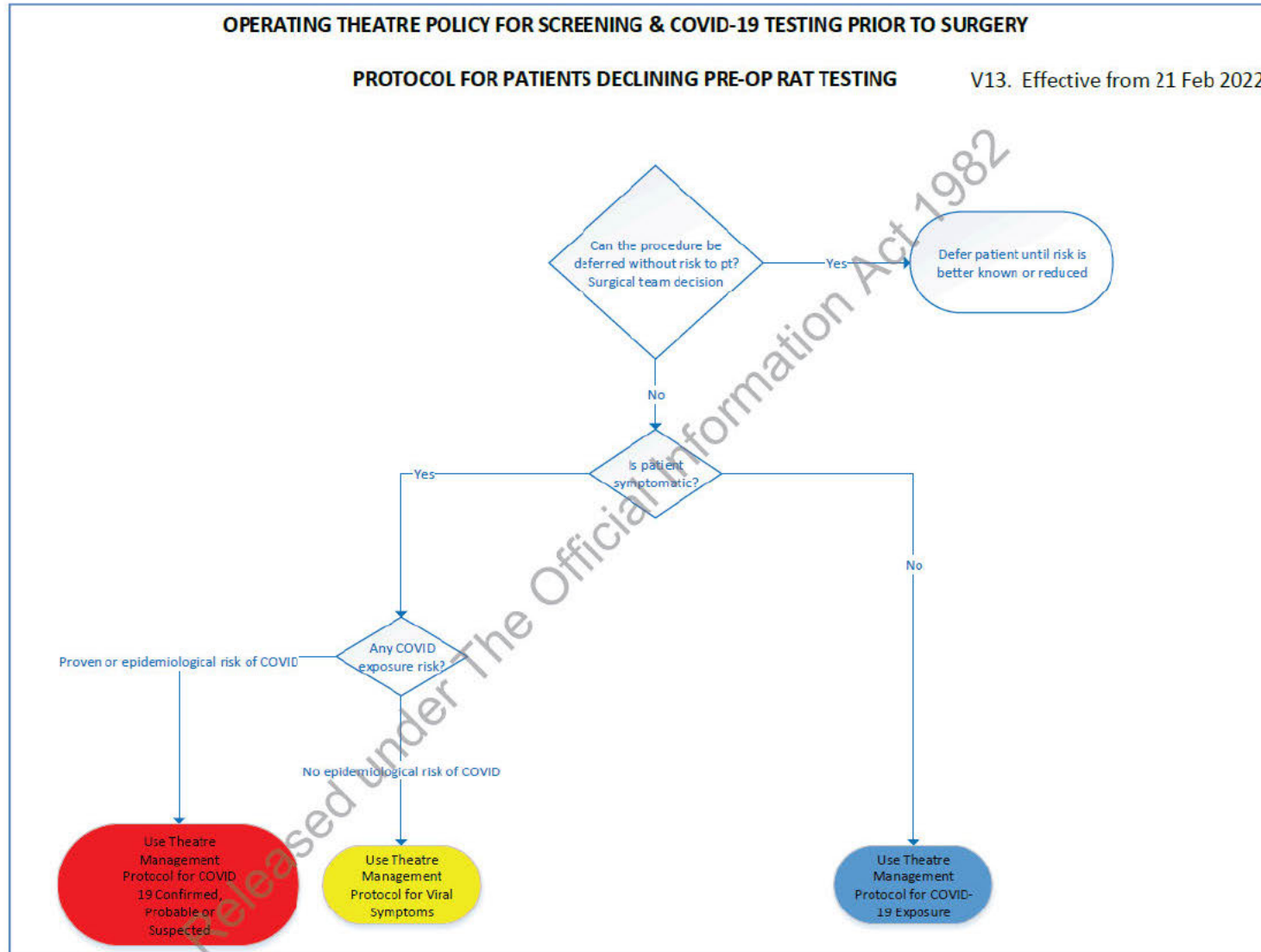
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Pre-operative Testing algorithm



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Definitions/Description

Terms and abbreviations used in this document are described below:

Term/Abbreviation	Description
CMH	Counties Manukau Health
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
RAT	Rapid Antigen Test
TADU	Theatre Admission & Discharge Unit

Associated Documents

Other documents relevant to this procedure are listed below:

NZ Legislation / Standards	None
CM Health Documents	https://cmhealth.hnz.health.nz/coronavirus/Pages/Omicron-Management.aspx
Other related documents	None

Released under The Official Information Act 1982

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