

# Monash Health Pathology

GP Newsletter

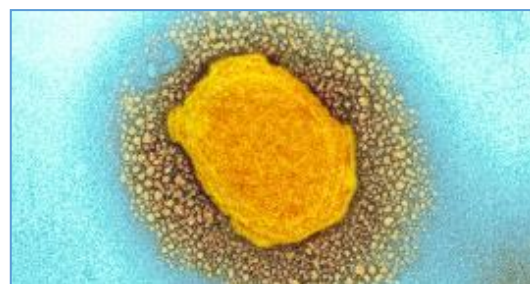
June 2022

## Monkeypox – What you need to know

**As discussed by Prof. Tony Korman, Director, Monash Health Infectious Diseases, Unit Head Microbiology.**

Eight cases of monkeypox have been identified in Australia recently. With approximately 1700 cases being diagnosed in 35 other countries.

The important thing to note is, monkeypox is not COVID-19. Due to the nature of its transmissibility, monkeypox will not result in a pandemic. Prolonged close contact with a symptomatic person is required for human-to-human transmission to occur.



### What to look for.

The incubation period of monkeypox is generally 7 to 14 days. Symptoms on days 1 to 3 are non-specific including fever, headache, muscle pain and enlarged lymph nodes. This is followed by a widespread rash, progressing from flat red spots to fluid-filled and pus-filled blisters before forming scabs.

### Suspected monkeypox?

There are precautions you can take if you are treating a patient suspected to have monkeypox:

- Isolate the patient, taking both contact and airborne precautions, wearing an N95 mask, eye protection, gown and gloves
- Notify Infectious Diseases
- Specimen collection including swabs of lesions and oral/nasal (national guidelines under development).

### Treatment and prevention.

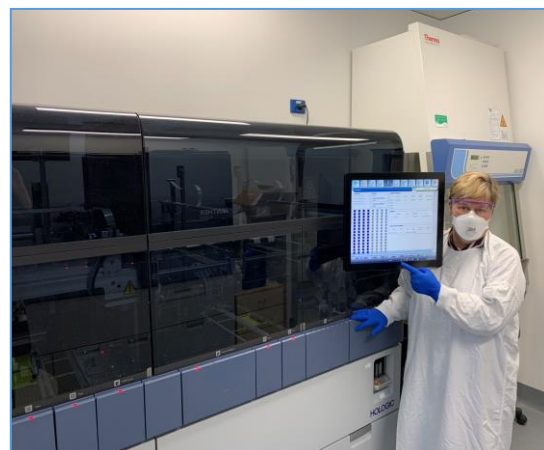
While there are no proven treatments, some antivirals may be considered.

Smallpox vaccines are known to be effective in preventing monkeypox, and could be considered for some close contacts. However, wide-spread vaccination against monkeypox is not likely.

*Approved by Prof. Tony Korman, Director Monash Health Infectious Diseases, Unit Head Microbiology*

# The Evolution of Molecular Microbiology at Monash Health Pathology

The onset of the pandemic brought tremendous changes to the molecular microbiology laboratory located at Monash Medical Centre in Clayton. In 2019 the laboratory was performing 200 respiratory PCR tests a day and was open 7 days a week 8am to 4.30pm, staffed by 3 scientists.



At the height of COVID-19 testing, the laboratory underwent an incredible transformation and was capable of running 5000 tests a day with 30 employees covering 24\7 shifts ensuring specimens were processed and results finalised with minimal delays. At which time, the prevalence of COVID-19 in specimens sent to the laboratory was >20%. To date the laboratory has performed more than 700,000 COVID-19 tests!

Monash Health Pathology has played a key role in supporting the community through providing testing from the Monash Health community testing facilities and the Bass Coast and South Gippsland testing sites, with some days receiving over 3500 swabs from these sites.

Another significant reason for the increased testing numbers, was due to the implementation of COVID-19 surveillance testing for Monash Health employees, leading to the testing of over 1000 swabs a day. Many of these tests were performed on saliva swab specimens. Leading to Monash Pathology being one of the first laboratories in Australia to be accredited for COVID-19 saliva testing, by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), after a large validation was undertaken by the laboratory.

While many specimens required only COVID-19 testing, the laboratory has continued to test hospital patients presenting with respiratory symptoms, with a Respiratory Pathogens panel, consisting of 12 viruses. As to continue to diagnose and monitor, the prevalence of the range of viruses, capable of causing upper respiratory tract infections. The benefit of this strategy was highlighted late in 2021, when patients began presenting at Emergency Departments throughout Monash Health, with respiratory infections that were diagnosed as having an Influenza A infection.

While COVID-19 testing numbers have significantly decreased over the past few months, due to the closure of the Monash Health community drive through clinics, we continue to test approximately 600 specimens per day. Most specimens received from the Emergency Departments throughout Monash Health, receive a GeneXpert PCR test, which tests for Influenza A, Influenza B, SARS-CoV-2 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus. With results available in approximately 1 hour after being received in the laboratory, this rapid testing helps clinicians in the Emergency Departments to treat patients more efficiently.

The numbers of cases of Influenza A is on the rise with this virus now replacing COVID-19 as the most common virus detected in upper respiratory tract samples sent to the laboratory.

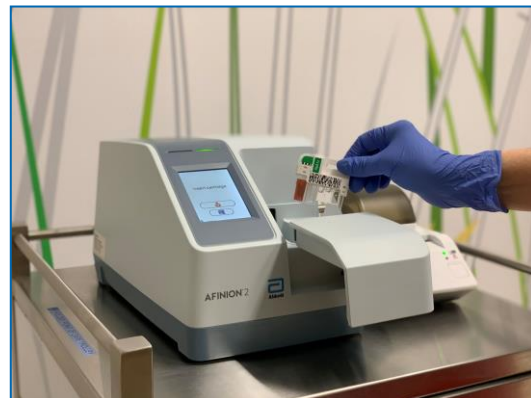
*Article by, Michelle Francis, Senior scientist, Molecular microbiology, Monash Health Pathology.*

# Monash Health Pathology News

## Point of care

At Monash Health Pathology, we provide the Bass Coast and South Gippsland area with crucial Point-of-care testing at multiple hospital and clinic sites.

Point-of-care (POC) testing is performed in close proximity, or at the site of the patient, with the results helping with immediate patient management. POC is quickly becoming an integral part of clinical decision making. By enabling rapid diagnosis of patients, and hastening possible treatment choices. But most importantly, it relieves pressure on a stressed healthcare system.



The testing we provide includes Chemical Biochemistry, such as Troponin (indicative of myocardial infarction), Glucose/Ketones, HbA1c, Blood Gases and General Chemistry. We also provide Haematology tests that include Coagulation and Haemoglobin testing.

We service 13 Monash Health hospitals and clinic sites, with 110 remotely connected devices, including approximately 5000 hand held devices. In regional Victoria, our POC devices are located at Yarram & District Health Centre, South Gippsland Hospital (Foster), Philip Island Health Hub, Wonthaggi Hospital, Leongatha Hospital and Korumburra Hospital.

The POC team is a part of the Biochemistry Department, at Monash Health Pathology, and our main office is located at Monash Medical Centre in Clayton. Our team is comprised of Lisa Mackay, Point-of-Care Coordinator, Toni Velazquez (Medical Technician), and Shari Mitchell (Medical Scientist) supervisor of our regional services.

If you have any requests or questions regarding Point-of-Care testing, please don't hesitate to contact us.

POC Mobile: 0436 612 525

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*Article by, Shari Mitchell, Medical Scientist, Point of care team, Monash Health Pathology*

## HealthLink

We are committed to improving our result delivery service.



In an effort to improve our service delivery to you. We ask, that if you are not yet utilising HealthLink. That you discuss with you IT department, the possibility, of installing this secure messaging software. This software provides a secure link, between Monash Health Pathology and Imaging, and your practices software. Allowing for, the safe and timely delivery, of results and reports.

This software is free, safe and improves report delivery. No need for long mail delivery times, two step authentication login processes, or cumbersome paper faxes.

<https://au.healthlink.net/>

## Receiving your patient's results

We are able to provide patient results to you in the format you require; downloaded into your practice software, faxed or hard copy.

To set up your preferred result format, please contact us on:

**9594 4538**

or email [pathology@monashhealth.org](mailto:pathology@monashhealth.org)

The referring Doctor will be notified of any critical results.



## Expertise and advice

Our Pathologists and Scientific employees are available any time to assist with pathology reports or referrals. Please contact us at 9594 4538 or email [pathology@monashhealth.org](mailto:pathology@monashhealth.org)

## Pathology announcements

We are pleased to advise of two key appointments within Pathology: Rhiannon Bentley in the role of Operations Manager, and Daniel Masters as Client Relationship Manager.

Rhiannon and Daniel are both excited about their roles, and are looking forward to continuing their work with the same commitment and dedication.

## Key contacts

**Daniel Masters**  
Client Relationship Manager  
9594 5850

**Rhiannon Bentley**  
Operations Manager  
9594 4973

**Kristy De George**  
General Manager Pathology  
9594 3479

# THE VALUE OF PATHOLOGY THROUGHOUT COVID-19

## The value of Pathology

Pathology is the cornerstone of patient diagnosis and underpins the Australian healthcare system as a whole. Due to its hardworking teams of pathologists, laboratory managers, technicians and assistants, medical scientists, pathology collectors, and couriers who transport the samples, pathology greatly improves the Australian healthcare system. In turn, patients accessing the services are better able to live healthier lives.

Access to pathology tests is vital for individual patient care and optimising health outcomes. It also allows for cost-effective decisions to be made in disease prevention and in combating diseases before they become chronic or life-long. It is a highly utilised service, with around half the Australian population undergoing at least one pathology test every year.

Australia's pathology workforce consists of around 35,000 people who collect, process and report on a huge 500 million pathology tests each year.

Pathology is not only valuable in investigating diseases, but also in screening for such diseases regularly. National screening programmes such as the National Bowel Cancer Screening Program (NBCSP), or the National Cervical Screening Program (NCSP) have successfully reduced the rates of severe bowel cancer and cervical cancer in the Australian population. For example, regular Cervical Screening Tests (CSTs) in Australia have massively reduced the incidence of cervical cancer by at least 50% in women over the age of 25.

Investing in pathology gives significant returns to the population. Quick turnaround times for pathology investigations means pathology teams can utilise test results to faster make decisions about the next steps of a treatment pathway, increasing healthcare sector productivity and minimising the impact of an illness on a patient's life. Pathology services in Australia are amongst the highest quality and the most accessible in the world for patients.

## The value of pathology testing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the value of pathology has never been more abundantly clear to both the general public and healthcare workers. PCR testing (polymerase chain reaction) allows pathology teams to test for the COVID-19 virus via a simple swab, and genomic testing is used to identify new strains of the virus as they develop and to track which variants are spreading in the community.

As a result of the pandemic, there has been investment in pathology testing technology and infrastructure. This can also be used to test for a number of other diseases, holding huge value looking toward the future of pathology testing.

The value of Pathology throughout Covid-19, 8<sup>th</sup> April 2022, Know Pathology know Healthcare. Sourced 31.05.2022  
<https://knowpathology.com.au/the-value-of-pathology-throughout-covid-19/>

## Collection centre locations

Collection Centre	Address	Open Hours
<b>BERWICK</b> Casey Hospital	<b>Casey Hospital</b> 62 – 70 Kangan Drive, Berwick Ph: 8768 1442	Mon-Fri 0800 - 1700
<b>BERWICK</b> Berwick Healthcare	<b>Berwick Healthcare</b> 76 Clyde Road, Berwick Ph: 9792 8021	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>CLAYTON</b> Monash Medical Centre	<b>Monash Medical Centre</b> Public Pathology collection rooms, 246 Clayton Road, Clayton Ph: 9594 2383	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>CLAYTON</b> Jessie McPherson	<b>Jessie McPherson Private Hospital</b> Private Consulting Suites, Suite G, 246 Clayton Road, Clayton Ph: 9594 2469	Mon-Fri 0800 – 1800 Sat 0800 - 1400
<b>CLAYTON</b> Monash Children's Hospital	<b>Children's pathology, Monash Children's Hospital</b> 246 Clayton Road, Clayton Ph: 8572 3081	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>CRANBOURNE</b> Cranbourne Centre	<b>Cranbourne Centre</b> 140 – 154 Sladen Street, Cranbourne Ph: 5990 6176	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700 Sat 0900 - 1300
<b>DANDENONG</b> Dandenong Hospital	<b>Dandenong Hospital</b> 135 David Street, Dandenong Ph: 9554 1901/2	Mon-Fri 0800 - 1800 Sat 0800 - 1200 Sun 0800 - 1200
<b>DANDENONG</b> Monash Community Health	<b>Monash Health Community</b> 122 Thomas Street, Dandenong Ph: 9792 7854	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>DANDENONG</b> Monash Women's Clinic	<b>Monash Women's Clinic</b> 135 David Street, Dandenong Ph: 9792 8003	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>MOORABBIN</b> Moorabbin Hospital	<b>Moorabbin Hospital</b> 823 – 865 Centre Road, East Bentleigh Ph: 9928 8178	Mon-Fri 0800 - 1700
<b>PAKENHAM</b> Pakenham Health Centre	<b>Pakenham Health Centre</b> Henty Way, Pakenham Ph: 5941 0526	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700 Sat 0800 - 1200
<b>SPRINGVALE</b> Dandenong Community Health	<b>Greater Dandenong Community Health Service</b> 55 Buckingham Avenue, Springvale Ph: 8558 9012	Mon-Fri 0830 - 1700
<b>Pathology Results</b>	<b>For Pathology results</b> or all other general enquiries. Please call Ph: <b>9594 4538</b>	



**Monash Health**  
Pathology

Collection Centre	Address	Telephone	Hours
<b>COWES</b>	<b>Phillip Island Health Hub</b> 50-54 Church Street, Cowes	<b>Ph: (03) 5951 2120</b>	Monday to Friday 8.00am – 4.00pm Saturday 8.00am – 12.00pm
<b>FOSTER</b>	<b>Foster Community Health Centre</b> 87 Station Street, Foster	<b>Ph: (03) 8572 2120</b>	Monday to Friday 8.00am – 2.30pm
<b>KORUMBURRA</b>	<b>Korumburra Hospital</b> 65 Bridge Street, Korumburra	<b>Ph: (03) 5654 2799</b>	Monday to Friday 8:00am – 3.00pm
<b>LANGWARRIN</b>	<b>St. Augustine Family Medical Centre</b> Shop 18, 385 Cranbourne-Frankston Road, Langwarrin	<b>Ph: (03) 8572 2122</b>	Monday to Friday 8.30am – 12.30pm
<b>LEONGATHA</b>	<b>Leongatha Hospital</b> 66 Koonwarra Road, Leongatha	<b>Ph: (03) 5667 5573</b>	Monday to Friday 8.00am – 4.00pm Saturday 9.00am – 11.00am
<b>WONTHAGGI</b>	<b>Wonthaggi Hospital</b> 235 Graham Street, Wonthaggi	<b>Ph: (03) 5671 3292</b> <b>Fax: (03) 5671 4293</b>	Monday to Friday 8.30am - 5.00pm Saturday 8.30am – 10.30am Sunday 8.00am – 12.00 noon
<b>YARRAM</b>	<b>Yarram &amp; District Health Service</b> 85-91 Commercial Road, Yarram	<b>Ph: (03) 5182 0360</b> <b>Fax: (03) 5182 0393</b>	Monday to Friday 8:00am - 2:30pm