

FAQ for GPs- to support role in testing

Information from the Department of Health

8 July 2025

Please read this fact sheet in conjunction with the factsheet that outlines the testing process.

Testing recommendations

1. Should GPs test for other infectious diseases?

The department is recommending screening only for the specific infectious diseases. Families are informed of these recommendations when they call the dedicated advice line 1800 791 241, and when they receive an SMS following their call.

Refer to fact sheet for further information on the advice line process and the tests required.

2. Why different tests recommended for different children?

Different screening tests are recommended for different children based on their potential risk exposure, which is based on when and where they may have been exposed. This advice was determined through a public health risk assessment and expert advice.

Two children who attend the same centre may not receive the same testing recommendations if they have attended over different time periods.

Pathology tests

3. Is specific information required on the pathology request form?

Requesting clinicians should note on the pathology request that the samples should be sent to the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL) for analysis. This supports coordinated monitoring of screening.

VIDRL and pathology providers have been advised that samples for the recommended tests for children should be processed at VIDRL during this public health response. No further information about the public health response needs to be included on the form.

4. Do GPs need to complete follow up serology for those recommended to have syphilis testing?

No. Serial serology is not required as part of the screening recommendations. There is no need to repeat syphilis testing if the result is negative.

5. Are there laboratories that specialise in taking blood tests for young children?

Paediatric blood collection should follow standard procedures. If sample collection is difficult, refer to other services for pathology collection via your usual pathways.

Where possible, the Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) will have staff available who are experienced in the collection of bloods from young children.

6. Are swabs required for the recommended screening tests?

No. The recommended tests include urine or urine and serology only, as outlined in the SMS sent to families.

7. Do families have to pay for the recommended pathology tests?

No. Tests processed at VIDRL are free of charge for the specified tests, even for families without a Medicare card.

The patient should not be billed for any out-of-pocket costs associated with the pathology testing recommended by the Department of Health.

Any additional tests requested by the clinician at the same time as the recommended screening tests require separate test request forms, and should be billed according to standard procedures.

8. What if tests were sent to primary pathology and not the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory?

GPs should specify on the request form that samples be sent to the Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL). This helps ensure consistent monitoring of the screening response.

If samples are sent to a local pathology laboratory, those labs have been requested to forward these to VIDRL.

However, in some cases, tests may still be processed locally due to the sudden change in procedures. In such cases, GPs do not need to take any further action beyond reporting the results to the family once available.

Regardless of the processing laboratory, GPs should follow standard procedures for reporting the results to families and comply with notifiable disease reporting requirements for any positive results.

Refer to the fact sheet for more detail on reporting requirements.

Testing referral and results pathway

9. Will the test results be uploaded to My Health Record?

If families/guardians do not consent to having tests recorded on my Health Record, the 'do not send to My Health Record' (or similar) tick box should be checked. Refer to the factsheet for GPs for further information.

10. Should testing consultations be bulk billed and what about non-Medicare card holders?

Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) are providing screening and assessment services for identified children who may be at risk at no cost, including non-Medicare-card holders.

General practices are requested to consider bulk billing or alternative billing options to ensure access to care for the recommended screening.

11. If families have since moved interstate, would we refer to our relevant state pathology and forensic services?

The dedicated advice line can guide families who have moved interstate. Tests ordered through interstate clinics fall under that state's reporting requirements.

12. If there is a positive result, do families also have to be tested?

Follow up care for positive results in paediatric patients is through referral to the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (VFPMS) at the Royal Children's Hospital. VFPMS will assess whether the family requires screening or treatment. Refer to the fact sheet for more details on the VFPMS referral and care.

Further information and supports for families

13. Is there guidance on what to say to the child about why they are getting tested and to help families talk to their children about why they are being tested?

Yes. Resources available are listed on the website at: www.vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation.

14. What information is available in other languages?

Interpreters are available via the advice line (1800 791 241, open daily). Families should request an interpreter when calling.

Translated trauma reaction and recovery factsheets are available at the Better Health Channel www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/trauma-reaction-and-recovery.

15. What should I advise families who want to report additional incidents of sexual abuse?

Families can contact Crime Stoppers at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au or on 1800 333 000. These contact details are also available on the website www.vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation.

16. What social and mental health supports are available for distressed families?

Families can also access the dedicated advice line for assistance in accessing more intensive supports through Victorian government supported services, and a referral to this service where needed.

The website vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation contains more information for information about support services available including supports for sexual abuse and victims of crime resources:

- [1800 RESPECT](#) who can provide support for those experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, domestic, family and sexual violence.
- [Sexual Assault Crisis Line](#) (SACL) on [1800 806 292](tel:1800806292) for support with an immediate crisis. SACL is a state-wide (Victoria), after-hours, confidential telephone service for people who have experienced both past and recent sexual assault. SACL operates between 5pm to 9am on weeknights and throughout weekends and public holidays.
- [Sexual Assault Services Victoria](#) (SAS Vic) is the peak body for sexual assault and harmful sexual behaviour services in Victoria. SAS Vic can help find a local sexual assault services and provide information for parents and families who wish to access more information on the sector, or how to support themselves and their child. Families can visit SAS Vic's [Child Sexual Abuse in Early Childhood Education and Care Settings web page](#).

Other general wellbeing services that may be relevant, depending on the family's needs include:

Providers	Service description	Location	Contact details
Partners in Wellbeing	For 16 years and over A free and confidential phone service Available 9am to 5pm, Monday – Friday.	Statewide	1300 375 330
Beyond Blue	All ages A free and confidential via phone online chat, and email Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	Statewide	1300 224 636
Headspace Positive Parenting Program Triple P	For 12 -25 year olds Online and in person services available. Call contact number for locations and opening hours. Triple P provides a toolbox of strategies and advice about how to cope with challenging and complex issues. It includes access to a wide range of evidence-based free online courses for families to access via app as well as computer.	Statewide Online Via app Statewide	1800 650 890 To find Triple P providers in Australia, use our Find a Provider map .
Raising Children Network	Main website that families access in Victoria for general information. Website includes a specific resource on coping with trauma: Trauma: coping and looking after yourself Raising Children Network	Online Statewide	raisingchildren.net.au