

Factsheet for GPs and clinical Urgent Care Clinic staff to support role in testing

Information from the Department of Health

3 July 2025

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

Notification of the need for testing

The Department of Health is recommending testing for some children who may have been exposed to an infectious disease in childcare settings in Victoria.

This recommendation is for a specific cohort of children. Children are not recommended to be tested if they did not attend one of the sites in the infection risk periods. Information is available for families and the public at vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation, including the relevant child care centres.

A dedicated advice line at 1800 791 241 has been set up as the central contact for families/guardians to determine when tests are needed and which tests are required in relation to the infection risk period. The following outlines the steps for parents and guardians to seek confirmation of the need for testing:

1. Parents/guardians call the dedicated advice line
2. The dedicated advice line will assess the risk of exposure and advise parents/guardians if testing is recommended for their child
3. The dedicated advice line will send a follow up SMS outlining the testing, if recommended, and the SMS will link to a fact sheet on the tests
4. The dedicated advice line will advise parents/guardians that they can get the testing via their usual GP or an Urgent Care Clinic (UCC). The caller will be advised to take this SMS with them to the UCC or GP clinic.

Parents/Guardians who call will fall into two groups:

1. Parents/guardians of children who have received correspondence advising them to call the dedicated advice line established to support these families.
2. Parents/guardians who did not receive correspondence but think their child may be impacted may call the dedicated advice line.

If parent/guardians present with their child for testing without having received testing recommendations from the advice line, clinics should:

- encourage the parent/guardians to check the list of child care centres on the website vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation If they still believe their child should be tested, encourage them to contact the dedicated advice line on 1800 791 241 for advice and information on other supports.

- The advice line can connect parents/guardians with an UCC to arrange testing or provide them with testing information via SMS to take to their usual GP.
- Children should be tested in line with the SMS from the dedicated advice line with or without receiving a letter.

Urgent Care Clinics

All Victorian UCCs are available to support testing, and designated UCCs in the suburbs closest to the impacted childcare centres have extra staff on hand to support parents/guardians to take required blood or urine samples for children recommended testing.

Required tests

Parent/guardians will receive an SMS from the dedicated advice line outlining the recommended tests for their child and will be advised to bring this SMS with them when they attend an UCC or Medicare UCC or their usual GP for testing.

- If a family has elected to attend a UCC, the UCC will also be advised of the testing requirements via a warm referral from the dedicated advice line.

Children should be tested in line with the SMS from the dedicated advice line. Depending on the advice, children should either be tested for:

1. Syphilis (serology), chlamydia/gonorrhoea PCR (urine test); **OR**
2. Chlamydia/gonorrhoea PCR (urine test).

Testing for any other infections has not been recommended as part of this process.

Management of samples and timing of results

Requesting clinicians need to complete a pathology request and record on the request that the tests should be sent to the **Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory (VIDRL)** to facilitate coordinated monitoring of screening.

- GPs may refer families to a pathology provider for blood or urine sample collection.

Clinicians should discuss notification of results. Where families/guardians do not consent to have the test recorded on my Health Record, the 'do not send to My Health Record' (or similar) tick box should be checked.

The tests can be collected or picked up and forwarded by any pathology provider. Primary pathology laboratories have been advised to send any samples for syphilis serology, gonorrhoea and chlamydia urine PCR testing in under 13s directly to VIDRL for processing.

- Note, ordering clinicians may receive notification of the result from both VIDRL and primary pathology providers.

Usually, results are available in less than a week. If there are high volumes of tests received at VIDRL results may take longer.

Blood sample volume

The recommend syphilis serology specimen volume for individuals less than 13 years is at least 500 uL. Clinicians collecting samples at a UCC or taking a blood sample in general practice, should collect a 500 uL (0.5 mL) minimum sample if possible.

- GPs may also choose to refer to pathology providers for blood collection.

Collecting urine samples from infants

Please follow advice from the Royal Children's Hospital for collection of urine samples. Clean catch or urine bag methods are recommended for children who are not toilet trained. It is recommended that the sample is collected within the clinic with the parent/carer present.

- https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Urine_samples/micro-urine-for-babies-pi-aclmar-pat-nat-00049-digital.pdf
- GPs may also choose to refer to pathology providers for urine collection.

Informing families of results

Arrangements should be made to provide results to the parent/guardian. When more than one test is required, results should be provided to the parent/guardian when all results are available (to avoid multiple phone calls or visits).

Where results are negative, offer families experiencing distress guidance on seeking further information and support as follows.

- Call the dedicated advice line on 1800 791 241
- Visit the website vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation for information about support services available including supports for sexual abuse and victims of crime resources.
- See your regular GP for ongoing advice and support. For those attending a UCC, the UCC can assist the patient with identifying a GP if they don't already have one.
- Access the range of free and confidential mental health supports available outlined below.

Positive results

For follow up care of positive results GPs and UCCs clinicians should contact the Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (VFPMS) at the Royal Children's Hospital to discuss treatment and to arrange a specialist appointment for further assessment. This specialist team can advise on what treatment is needed and whether it will be arranged through their service.

Note for clinician: VFPMS will rescreen child and arrange antibiotic treatment if required, in consultation with RCH Infectious Diseases team.

Contact details for VFPMS:

- <https://www.rch.org.au/vfpms/>
- **1300 66 11 42**

With patient consent, UCCs should provide a clinical handover with a summary of the appointment to the patient's usual GP.

The test ordering clinician should notify the Department of Health as per the notification procedures outlined below.

Mandatory Reporting Requirements

You should ensure that you complete your mandatory reporting obligations. Refer to mandatory reporting for professionals guidance.

Reporting results

Syphilis

Syphilis is a 'routine' notifiable condition and must be notified by medical practitioners and pathology services in writing within 5 days of diagnosis.

This is a Victorian statutory requirement.

Specific information must be notified under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019. To maintain confidentiality, only the name code (the first 2 letters of the surname followed by the first 2 letters of the first name) is required. A questionnaire is sent to the diagnosing doctor to collect additional information on the case that is essential for detecting disease trends and informing policy development.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is a 'routine' notifiable condition and must be notified by pathology services in writing within 5 days of diagnosis. Medical practitioners are not required to notify cases of Chlamydia.

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is a 'routine' notifiable condition and must be notified by medical practitioners and pathology services in writing within 5 days of diagnosis.

Notification of selected sexually transmissible infections (STIs) is required under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019. To maintain confidentiality, only the name code (the first two letters of the surname followed by the first two letters of the first name) is required.

This is a Victorian statutory requirement.

Further details regarding the notification procedures for infectious diseases are available at:

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/notifiable-infectious-diseases-conditions-and-micro-organisms>

Other supports available for children, parents, carers and families

There are a range of free and confidential mental health supports available to support children, parents, carers and their families including:

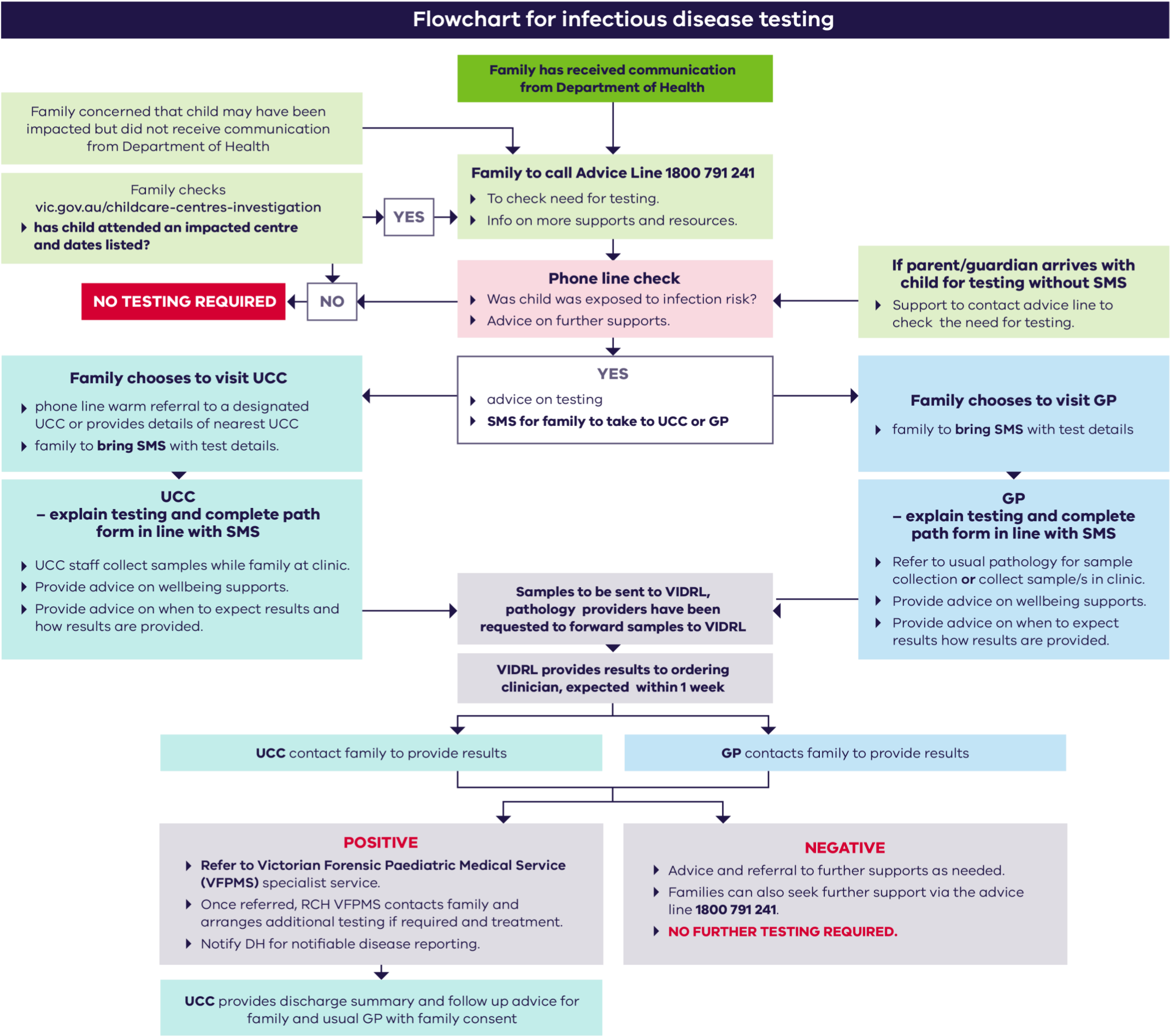
Providers	Service description	Location	Contact details
Partners in Wellbeing	For 16 years and over A free and confidential phone service Available 9am to 5pm, Monday – Friday.	Statewide	1300 375 330
Beyond Blue	All ages A free and confidential via phone online chat, and email Available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.	Statewide	1300 224 636
Headspace	For 12 -25 year olds Online and in person services available. Call contact number for locations and opening hours.	Statewide	1800 650 890

Billing arrangements

Urgent Care Clinics (UCCs) are providing screening and assessment services for identified children who may be at risk at no cost.

General practices are requested to consider bulk billing visits related to this recommendation for screening.

Appendix 1: Flowchart for infectious disease testing



The advice line **1800 791 241** is the central contact for families/guardians to determine when tests are needed and which tests are required in relation to the infection risk period.

Children are not recommended to be tested if they did not attend one of the sites in the infection risk periods

Steps for parents and guardians to seek confirmation of the need for testing:

1. Parents/guardians call the dedicated advice line.
2. Advice line assesses risk of exposure and need for testing.
3. The dedicated advice line advise if the child needs testing and if so provides advice on the recommended testing.
4. The dedicated advice line will send a follow up SMS outlining the testing required including a link to a fact sheet on the tests.
5. The advice line will advise parents/guardians that they can get the required test via their usual GP or an Urgent Care Clinic, and to bring the SMS with them to the clinic.

Advice on wellbeing supports, sexual health services and victim of crime resources is available in Department of Health fact sheets and vic.gov.au/childcare-centres-investigation

Based on SMS, child may need:

- Syphilis serology (blood test) & Chlamydia/Gonorrhoea PCR (urine test) **OR**
- Chlamydia/Gonorrhoea PCR (urine test).

NO OTHER TESTS ARE REQUIRED

Refer testing guidance

Blood Sample: at least 0.5 mL for children under 13

Urine Sample: Use clean catch or urine bag

Samples to be sent to Victorian Infectious Diseases Reference Laboratory

Mandatory reporting requirements – see fact sheet

Notifiable disease reporting – see fact sheet

Note: result reports may be received from both pathology provider and VIDRL for the same test

POSITIVE CASE: Contact details for Victorian Forensic Paediatric Medical Service (VFPMS) referral:

www.rch.org.au/vfpms
1300 66 11 42

- VFPMS will rescreen child and arrange antibiotic treatment if required, in consultation with RCH Infectious Diseases team.