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# Important Laboratory Update

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23 March 2020

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## **URGENT NOTIFICATION - Home Visit collection services**

Since the government has initiated the alert level 3 (and then 4) for combating COVID 19 the home visit phlebotomy service has been overwhelmed with phone calls and bookings for patients in voluntary isolation and isolation based on contact or travel status.

As this is a finite service we are unable to offer home visits for those patients who are in isolation based on age or their immunocompromised status.

Please ensure this service is only used for its intended purpose which is to provide testing for patients who are **unable to come** in to a collection centre and where testing is **clinically urgent**.

**Please defer any request for testing that is not immediately urgent in both isolated patients and the normal community population.**

For patients who have been asked to self-isolate based on their travel history or contact with suspected or confirmed cases we may provide this service **if urgently required**. Please ensure this is made clear at booking as our staff will be required to wear PPE gear. Please note this is a phlebotomy service only and swabs for COVID-19 are not performed by Labtests (the home visit team or collection centres).

Unless the patient is a patient who normally uses the home visit services i.e. repeat requests, all requests must be booked by phone by the referrer requesting the test. Please **phone: 09 574-7399 ext 3**. Your referral will be discussed with a pathologist.

We will also be screening the repeat requests to ensure they are absolutely necessary as many nursing homes are in lock down and contact with our phlebotomy staff may pose an additional risk at this time.

Prior bookings will be reviewed. Please be aware these may have to be referred back to ensure they are necessary.

Each referrer will have to decide for themselves how best to advise their patients who are vulnerable but do not meet criteria for a home visit.

We appreciate your understanding at this time.

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