

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Patient Update #15

3 December 2021

Dear Valued Repromed Patient,

In light of this week's occurrences, we are now in a position where COVID-19 is present within the South Australian community and in numbers that require us to shift the way we manage our clinics. Whilst outbreaks are being contained, we feel it prudent to maintain our position of proceeding with an abundance of caution to ensure we operate in an environment of reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission between staff and patients.

Below outlines what changes will be implemented in our clinics as of Monday 6 December 2021.

1. Are you required to be fully vaccinated to have treatment at Repromed?

No. Repromed will continue to treat unvaccinated patients while it is legally possible to do so. SA Health do not require patients undergoing non-emergency medical care (which fertility treatment is classified as) in hospitals and day surgeries to be vaccinated, however there are some changes that will impact unvaccinated patients and/or their partners which are outlined below.

2. Do you need to show evidence of being vaccinated against COVID-19 (i.e. your vaccination status) to Repromed?

No, however we are asking all patients what their vaccination status is. Currently you are not legally required to provide evidence of your vaccination status, but in the interests of patient and staff safety, we are asking for your vaccination status which we will add to your patient file. If you decline to provide this information we will manage your care as if you are unvaccinated.

From Friday 3 December 2021 Repromed staff will start to collect vaccination details of all our patients regardless of if you are attending for blood tests, ultrasounds, producing a semen sample or visiting our theatre.

When you arrive at our clinics, our Concierge will request to see proof of your COVID-19 vaccination. This can be in the form of a digital certificate or your Immunisation History Statement. To access / store your digital certificate on your smart phone (presented as a green tick after you register at a business via their QR code) use this link to the SA Gov website <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/vaccination/proof-of-covid-19-vaccination>

Repromed is seeking proof of your vaccination status as we know vaccination not only reduces your likelihood of contracting COVID-19 and becoming severely unwell, it also significantly reduces your chance of passing on the virus to others. Given that Repromed has a duty of care to both our patients and staff, there will be added precautions, testing and restriction on clinic visits for unvaccinated patients undergoing treatment with us.

3. If you have an upcoming doctor's appointment, will anything change?

Depending on your/your partner's vaccination status, your appointment is likely to be converted to a Telehealth appointment. Below outlines the various appointment types and how they will be managed. Please note that our Patient Services Team is currently in the process of contacting ALL patients with upcoming appointments and discussing their specific circumstances. We therefore ask for your patience as they work their way through the lists but rest assured you will be contacted by them.

- **All Review Patient Appointments and Nurse Instruction Appointments** - will to be converted to phone consults. Your appointment will be at the same time as currently scheduled and we will contact you, so please have your phone nearby and be ready for their call.

- **Pregnancy scan appointments - will of course be in person irrespective of vaccination status.** Partners can attend this pregnancy scan appointment if they have been fully vaccinated. Unvaccinated partners will not be able to attend unless they have had a COVID-19 screening test 48 hours prior to your appointment time and return a negative test result.
- **New Patient Appointments** – depending on your treating doctor and your vaccination status your appointment may be via phone or continue as a face-to-face appointment. Please note that only patients who are fully vaccinated will have the option of a face-to-face consult (if offered by their treating doctor). Unvaccinated patients and/or partners cannot attend face-to-face appointments but instead will have their consult via Telehealth.

4. If you have an upcoming blood test or routine ultrasound appointment, does anything change?

All patients currently in cycle and having routine bloods and ultrasound scans can continue to attend their appointment regardless of their vaccination status. Please note that partners/support people will not be permitted to attend your appointment with you, unless special medical circumstances mandates their attendance.

5. If you have an appointment to produce a semen sample, does anything change?

Unvaccinated men will be asked to produce diagnostic semen analysis samples at home, and then bring the sample into Repromed for analysis within an hour of production. Sterile containers can be purchased from pharmacies for use. Vaccinated men will be able to produce semen samples on site at Repromed for both diagnostic and treatment (i.e. IUI/IVF) purposes. Unvaccinated men will also produce semen samples for IVF and IUI treatment at Repromed, but in order to minimise the time you spend within the clinic and therefore the infection risk, you will be asked to remain in your car and our Pathology Department will call you when they are ready for you. After your sample has been produced you will be required to leave the clinic.

6. If you have a Lipiodol / HyCoSy appointment, does anything change?

Yes. Regardless of your vaccination status you can still attend your appointment however, as these are more prolonged procedures in a small room, creating an increased risk of viral infection, you will be required to have a COVID-19 screening test and return a negative result within 48 hours of your appointment. Repromed will provide you with a request form for this screening test to be performed. Please note that partners/support people will not be able to attend your appointment with you, unless under exceptional medical circumstances.

7. If you are having an Egg Collection or Day Surgery Procedure, does anything change?

Yes. As we know COVID-19 is an aerosol based virus which spreads from an infected person's mouth or nose via respiratory droplets. Patients attending theatre for their egg collections / procedures can not wear masks, therefore regardless of your vaccination status you will be required to have a COVID-19 screening test and return a negative test within 72 hours of your scheduled theatre visit.

Vaccinated partners can attend our clinic to escort you to and collect you from our Day Surgery Unit. Please be aware that during your procedure time if they are not in our Andrology Department for their own appointment to produce a semen sample, we ask that they not remain within the clinic.

Unvaccinated partners will not be allowed to enter our clinic to escort you to and collect you from our Day Surgery Unit. The patient having the procedure will be required to enter our Day Surgery Unit alone, however our team will escort them after they have recovered to our carpark area where you will be waiting to collect them. Please refer to dot point 5 if you are to produce a semen sample on the same day.

8. If you are having an Embryo transfer (ET), does anything change?

Yes. Regardless of your vaccination status you can still attend your Embryo Transfer appointment and vaccinated partners can attend with you however unfortunately unvaccinated partners/support people will not be able to attend your transfer appointment with you, unless under exceptional medical circumstances.

On the day of your appointment, one of our scientists will call you to discuss your embryo(s) instead of having a face-to-face discussion.

9. Can you still collect medications from our pharmacy?

Yes, if you are required to collect medications from our on-site pharmacy you are still able to do so however, where possible we prefer for the person collecting the medication to be vaccinated.

10. If you do contract COVID-19, will it impact your treatment?

Unfortunately, yes. Repromed is not in a position to provide treatment for patients with active COVID-19 as we have neither the facilities nor equipment to safely manage your care. If you develop COVID-19 during treatment we will cancel your cycle and delay treatment until you have fully recovered. This is good medical practice as it is unwise to try for a pregnancy if you have an active infection. It is also unreasonable to risk virus transmission to other patients. If we are required to cancel your treatment due to a COVID-19 infection, you will not be financially disadvantaged when you recommence treatment with us.

11. If you have a minor sniffle or other COVID-19 symptoms during treatment – what should you do?

As per SA Health guidelines, you are required to self-isolate until you can attend a COVID-19 testing centre. Do not come into a Repromed clinic until you have received a negative test result and contact our staff by phone, so we are aware of your situation. If you develop minor symptoms (e.g. mild sore throat, sniffle) on the day of your egg retrieval it is vitally you report these symptoms to us to protect other patients on the theatre list.

12. Can you bring your child/ren into Repromed?

No. As children under 12 years of age are currently unable to be vaccinated and their presence at Repromed is not a critical part of your fertility treatment therefore they will not be permitted to enter our clinics under any circumstances. We ask that you make alternative arrangements for their care as will we defer your appointment if you cannot find appropriate babysitting as unfortunately there can be no exemption to this policy. We know this is not a popular decision when implemented in the past however we ask for your continued understanding regarding this decision.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you to consider becoming vaccinated if not already done so. As Repromed has consistently stated, it is imperative that you are vaccinated to protect both your own health and that of others. As pregnant women are particularly vulnerable to complications from COVID-19, it is extremely important if you are considering becoming pregnant to get vaccinated as antibodies generated from vaccination will cross the placenta, providing your baby with some protection from the virus.

As always we are here to support you and if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. Rest assured that we are continually reviewing new information as it comes to hand and discussing how we need to adapt to ensure the safety of our valued our patients', our staff's and the South Australian community at all times.

Kind regards,

Kelton Tremellen
Medical Director, Repromed