

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

Media release

17 September 2020

Don't fake it till you make it! Be COVID responsible

Rural doctors are asking patients to be honest about any cold and flu-like symptoms they may have when visiting a hospital or doctor.

Dr Adam Coltzau, Clinical Lead of the COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response, said that it was essential that patients always be honest about any symptoms they may be suffering.

“First up, let me say that no matter what your symptoms are, you will still get a medical appointment,” Dr Coltazu said.

“We are here to care for you regardless of what way you are sick.

“But if you have an illness that results in COVID-like symptoms the medical practice or hospital absolutely needs to know before you land on the doorstep.

“This is to allow them to make plans and take precautions to keep the doctors, the medical staff as well as other patients safe from any potential exposure.

“If you have an appointment for something unrelated, but find yourself with a sniffle, please let us know in advance.

“New Zealand has shown us that even if you are in a COVID-free community there may be undiagnosed cases still circulating and we have a responsibility to ensure our staff and other patient are kept safe.”

With hayfever season now underway this is adding another layer of complexity around managing COVID-like symptoms and resulting in a larger number of people needing a consultation.

“We have seen a surge of people presenting to the doctor needing to get a COVID test or note to confirm they suffer from hayfever in order to return to work or school,” Dr Coltzau said.

“But even if you are SURE that's what it is, a runny nose, coughing and sneezing, just let the staff know in advance of your appointment.

“Telehealth services are also available, so it's possible you may not need to go in – you can have a consultation via your phone or computer at home.

COVID-19

RURAL AND REMOTE RESPONSE

“The other thing to remember, is if you are symptom free but have been in an hotspot area, please also let us know.

“We are just asking people to be honest. Don’t fake it and load up on cold and flu tablets to hide your symptoms and come anyway... we just want to be able to take the precautions that we need,” Dr Coltzau said.

‘But of course, if you do have symptoms it’s important to get tested for COVID-19.’”

The COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response is a joint initiative between the Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM).

Find more information on how to protect yourself, your family and community from COVID-19 at www.health.gov.au.

Find a video from the Federal Department of Health on how to properly wear a mask here: <https://publish.viostream.com/play/bfxgwognhhfmnn>.

A high resolution photo of RDAA President, Dr John Hall, is available here: <https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/687>

A high resolution photo of ACRRM President, Dr Ewen McPhee, is available here: <https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/968>

A high resolution photo of Dr Adam Coltzau is available here: <https://www.rdaa.com.au/documents/item/712>

Available for interview:

Dr John Hall - RDAA President

Dr Ewen McPhee - ACRRM President

Dr Adam Coltzau - Clinical Lead, RDAA and ACRRM COVID-19 Rural and Remote Response

Media contacts (RDAA)

Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638

Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890

Media contacts (ACRRM)

Petrina Smith on 0414 820 847

ACRRM National Office on 1800 223 226