



## Reception and Triage

Reception & Triage is one of two new areas (the other being Disease Surveillance), in Section 5 of the RACGP Infection Control Standards for Office Based Practices, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Practice staff need to be sufficiently trained in order to identify patients with symptoms of infectious disease, and to take necessary courses of action in a swift manner to prevent further disease outbreak, and placing further patients and staff within the practice at risk.

### Points to consider

- Staff should question patients on arrival. This involves routine questions and appropriate questions asked when the patient is showing symptoms relating to an infectious disease.
- Hand and respiratory hygiene products should be readily available for patients at various locations within the practice, and an infection control kit should be on hand for practice staff at reception. Patients presenting with infectious symptoms should be advised not to touch objects in the waiting room, i.e. toys and magazines.
- Isolating infectious patients from other patients if possible. Ensure there is adequate signage at the practice, which advises patients presenting with infectious symptoms to inform the receptionist upon arrival. Practices should display information on the practice notice board or in the practice Information Sheet.
- Include in the telephone message for patients on hold, that patients should advise reception if they think they may have an infectious disease.

Consideration needs to be given when booking patient appointments. A patient's privacy must be respected but basic information about the patient's symptoms can assist with preparing for the patient's care upon arrival. It is important the patient understands the reason for asking this general question is for their benefit, to ensure they receive the best possible care. All answers should be recorded and transmitted to the patient's doctor. When booking an appointment for a patient that has been identified as having a potentially infectious disease, ensure a time is chosen where there will be minimal patients in the waiting room.

It is recommended that practices thoroughly review the RACGP Infection Control Standards 4<sup>th</sup> Edition to ensure they are familiar with the requirements and that practices are suitably prepared in all areas of Disease Surveillance.

*Reference: RACGP Infection Control Standards for Office Based Practices – 4 Edition*