

RED HEN SPEECH PATHOLOGY INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

Infection prevention and control principles are fundamental to control and prevent the transmission of an infectious agent such as communicable diseases, transmissible infections and multi-resistant organisms (MROs). To deliver high-quality client care, maintain the safety of clients and staff, Red Hen Speech Pathology will implement procedures for infection prevention and control.

Definitions

Infectious Disease: When a micro-organism enters the body and creates an infection. This can include bacteria, fungi, or viruses. Examples include: tetanus, sepsisemia.

Communicable diseases: Communicable diseases are infectious diseases that can be transmitted from person to person. Transmission may be by contact with the person, contaminated surfaces or body fluids; droplet; or inhalation of airborne particles. Examples, influenza, whooping cough, RSV, COVID-19, Scabies.

MROs: Multiple-drug Resistant Organisms are bacteria that have become resistant to certain commonly used antibiotics. E.coli, Pseudomonas, Enterococci are examples of bacteria that can be multi-drug resistant. Examples: Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA), Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE).

Scope

This policy and associated procedures will apply to all Red Hen Speech Pathology staff and clients.

Policy Statement

- Infection prevention and control is each individual's responsibility.
- Red Hen Speech Pathology has an obligation to minimise risks and provide a healthy and safe work environment for clients, staff and others as reasonably feasible.
- Clients/Caregivers have a responsibility to inform their therapist of any illness or infections present or suspected to be present in the household in which therapy is scheduled to occur.
- Red Hen Speech Pathology staff undertake appropriate infection prevention and control measures to prevent and minimise the risk of infectious agent transmission.
- Red Hen Speech Pathology staff will comply with standard and transmission-based precautions and ensure the appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) as per relevant guidelines.
- Red Hen Speech Pathology will adhere to all guidelines and recommendations issued by the WA Dept of Health, WA Government, Federal Health authorities and/or Speech Pathology Australia to minimise risk of infection to staff, clients or their carers.

- Red Hen Speech Pathology staff will comply with the policies and procedures of any organisation on whose premises they conduct therapy, this includes but is not limited to schools, accommodation service providers, aged care providers, and employment organisations.

Procedures

Vaccination

- All staff of Red Hen Speech Pathology are encouraged to stay up to date with vaccinations including influenza and hepatitis B.
- All staff of Red Hen Speech Pathology will maintain Covid boosters as per recommendations from the Dept of Health.

Hygiene

- Alcohol based sanitizer is kept in the vehicle and work bag at all times.
- Therapists must wash hands before and after each session using alcohol-based sanitizers or soap and water. Hands may also be sanitized during a session if there is contact with a client, shared materials or therapist face.
- All clients of Red Hen Speech Pathology will be encouraged to use hand sanitiser at the commencement and end of each appointment.
- All therapy materials are regularly sanitized using approved cleaning agents.
- Where possible, assessments and intervention are conducted using an iPad rather than paper-based assessments due to ease of cleaning.
- Plastic sheets or pockets may be used to protect paper resources and enable easier cleaning.
- Consumption of food is to be discouraged during therapy appointments unless required for dysphagia assessment or intervention.
- Disposable gloves may be used when conducting dysphagia or voice assessments that require client contact.
- Face masks are worn in accordance with relevant government directives.
- Face shields are available for use in accordance with government directives/Speech Pathology Australia practice guidelines.
- Staff will follow the recommended reprocessing of reusable medical equipment and instruments.
- Staff and where possible, clients (with assistance if required) will practice appropriate respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette behaviour to minimise the transmission of infectious agents.

Management of Infection

Alternative models of service

- Telehealth services will be offered to clients as an alternative to face-to-face appointments when the client or therapist are unwell.

Responding to symptoms of illness

- Clients/Carers are requested to cancel face-to-face appointments if the client, carer or another family member/resident of the household is unwell with any gastro-intestinal, cold, or flu-like symptoms including vomiting, diarrhoea, cough, fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or nasal congestion.
- If Red Hen Speech Pathology staff are concerned that the client or any person present during an appointment is unwell with symptoms of communicable disease including but not limited to: fever, vomiting, diarrhoea, cough, runny nose, the appointment may be terminated and the individual will be invoiced for the full schedule appointment and travel time irrespective of how long the therapist stays.
- If Red Hen Speech Pathology staff experience any symptoms of communicable disease such as gastroenteritis, cold, flu or Covid scheduled face-to-face appointments will be cancelled until symptoms cease.

Notification

- It is recommended that clients/caregivers who have low immunity or immunosuppression conditions discuss their specific circumstances with their therapist.
- It is requested that therapists be notified of any MRO infection so that appropriate hygiene and infection control measures can be taken.
- It is requested that caregivers notify the therapist if there is a known outbreak of contagious disease such as gastroenteritis in a particular setting the therapist is due to visit eg. school.

Other

- The cancellation fee may be waived at the discretion of Red Hen Speech Pathology.
- Red Hen Speech Pathology staff will comply with all relevant directives from the WA Government or WA Health Dept to undertake self-isolation or quarantine.
- In the event that Perth is placed under restrictions, Red Hen Speech Pathology will use the Speech Pathology Australia Risk Assessment Tool (SPA-RAT) to assess the risk factors in relation to service provision.

Related legislation, regulations, and standards

WA Government

[COVID-19 coronavirus \(www.wa.gov.au\)](https://www.wa.gov.au)

Speech Pathology Australia

[Infection Prevention and Control Guideline \(speechpathologyaustralia.org.au\)](https://speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

Approvals

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Director: Manda Dalton