



Recall: Patients with Clinically Significant Test Results

While the Practice is not expected to follow up every test ordered, or to contact patients with the results of every test or investigation undertaken, there is considerable risk in not following up clinically significant tests and results.

The Practice needs a system in place to ensure that:

- All received test results, and clinical correspondence (e.g. reports from other health care providers or WorkCover letters) relating to a patient's clinical care are reviewed, noted in the patient's health file, and are initialled or signed by a Doctor (preferably the Doctor who ordered the test) after reviewing the results
- Clinically significant results are followed up

"Clinically Significant" is a judgement made by the GP that something is clinically important for that particular patient in the context of that patient's health care. The judgement may be:

- an abnormal result is clinically important and requires further action
- OR
- the result may be normal but still require further action.

Action on clinically significant results needs to be completed in a timely manner. The speed with which the results are acted on, and the degree of effort taken to contact the patient to discuss the results, will depend on the GP's judgement of the clinical significance of the results.

If the Practice needs to initiate follow up contact with a patient, it needs to be done in a reasonable manner. The number and types of attempts will take into account all of the circumstances. Depending on the patient outcome it may be appropriate to attempt contact via:

- three telephone calls at different times of the day, and
- a follow up letter sent via the post, and / or
- a registered letter sent via the post
(see suggested letter template on page 2)

All attempts to contact a patient with clinically significant test results will be documented in the patient health record.

Note: for privacy reasons it is not appropriate to leave messages relaying information on an answering machine or with relatives.

**Customise this letter by inserting
practice name & logo here**

Patients Name
Address 1
Address 2
Town/ Suburb
State/ Post code

Date (Day/Date/Month/Year)

SAMPLE *RECALL* LETTER
PATIENT UNABLE TO BE CONTACTED VIA TELEPHONE

Dear _____,

Results of your recent test (Insert test name) have been received by your doctor. We have been unable to contact you by telephone in the last few day to inform you, hence this letter.

Please ring the clinic on Tel: _____ to make an appointment time with the doctor/speak with the Doctor.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

YOUR NAME

YOUR TITLE

- *Ensure the envelope is addressed to the Patient and marked private and confidential.*
- *Ensure a copy of the letter is saved in the Patient's Health Record.*