

December 2021

Beaches Dental – Covid-19 Internal Vaccination Policy

Note: This Covid-19 internal vaccination policy (**Policy**) will be frequently updated from time to time as circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic (**Covid-19**) continue to change and evolve. Please ensure you are up-to-date with the latest version of this Policy which will be hosted on our website.

This Policy is primarily intended for frontline based workers only.

Opening Message

We at Beaches Dental acknowledge that the Covid-19 Pandemic has been an incredibly challenging time for all. Lockdowns, separation from loved ones and limitations on “life as normal” have significant impacts on physical and mental health. We remain grateful for your ongoing cooperation and teamwork during this time.

We also acknowledge that the topic of Covid-19 vaccination can be difficult and particularly challenging for some. The purpose of this document is not to force or compel our staff or patients to do something against their wishes. It is intended to ensure sufficient information is provided in order to make an informed decision and to understand our approach to this topic.

We have structured this Policy in a “Q&A” format to tackle the questions you (and others) may have and to allow us to update this document as the situation continues to change.

Please read this document carefully and ensure you stay up-to-date with further versions.

Is Covid-19 Vaccination Mandatory in Australia?

Currently, there is no legal requirement or compulsion for Australians to be vaccinated.

Vaccines are voluntary for Australians, although there are some industries (such as aged care, quarantine, some aspects of the health industry and education) whereby vaccination has been made mandatory by Government Health Order in order to continue to perform work. For more information on those health orders/industries, please read “legislation and public health orders requiring vaccination against corona virus” which has a link to the State/Territory orders: <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/coronavirus-and-australian-workplace-laws/covid-19-vaccinations-and-the-workplace/covid-19-vaccinations-workplace-rights-and-obligations#lawful-and-reasonable-directions-to-get-vaccinated>

Is Covid-19 vaccination mandatory in NSW given the “Roadmap to Reopening” announced by the NSW Premier?

The “NSW Roadmap to Reopening” announced by the NSW Premier grants certain freedoms to double vaccinated workers and members of the public once public vaccination targets are achieved.

You can read more about these freedoms (and restrictions) here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/rules/fully-vaccinated>

Importantly, the NSW Roadmap does not force vaccination upon an individual. However, it grants certain privileges and freedoms to those that are vaccinated versus those who are not. These freedoms align to the National Reopening Plan generally agreed to by State/Territory Premiers.

Whilst an individual is not compelled to vaccinate and may not wish to participate in the reopening initiatives, it is important that you understand the consequences of not being double vaccinated. That is, in New South Wales, you may not be able to return to the workplace or participate in other activities such as restaurant/café dining, hair/beauty services, gyms, physical retail shopping, attendances at events/recreation venues and socialising with family and friends for a specified period of time

Are patients required to be fully vaccinated in order to receive our services?

Notwithstanding the NSW Roadmap, as Beaches Dental Mona Vale is deemed to be providing an “essential service” and has been permitted to lawfully operate throughout the NSW stay-at-home order, the vaccination requirements under the NSW Roadmap for people requiring our services are not mandatory.

We do, however, strongly encourage all reasonable steps to be taken by our patients to consider the health and safety of our staff and other patients, including receiving their Covid-19 vaccinations and by following all other directions of the NSW Government (regular testing, QR code check-ins etc.)

Are Beaches Dental staff required to be fully vaccinated in order to service our patients or attend our clinic?

While there is currently no legal requirement or mandate for our staff to be fully vaccinated in order to perform their duties from the clinic, at Beaches Dental we strongly encourage all of our staff to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

I don't plan to have the Covid-19 Vaccination due to personal preference. What does this mean for me?

Beaches Dental strongly encourages all its workers and patients to be vaccinated against Covid-19. Beaches Dental is of the view that Covid-19 vaccination is the best way forward to protect the health and wellbeing of our community, particularly those most vulnerable.

Whilst Beaches Dental respects that Covid-19 vaccination is a personal choice, we encourage all our team and patients to consult their GP with any vaccination related concerns you may have, so that you can make an informed choice and understand the benefits and risks and associated with Covid-19 Vaccination. You can also access more information about Covid-19 Vaccination in various languages here: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-information-in-your-language>

It is important that you understand that by choosing not to vaccinate:

- If you reside in NSW, you will not be able to enjoy some of the other freedoms granted under the initial stages of the NSW Roadmap to reopening (such as restaurant dining, hair/beauty/gyms, socialisation with family and friends)
- If you reside in NSW, you may not be able to return to the workplace or enjoy other freedoms for a specified period.

I am ineligible to receive a Covid-19 Vaccination due to medical reasons. What does this mean for me?

We at Beaches Dental respect that each person has individual health needs and circumstances.

If you cannot be vaccinated due to medical reasons, please let us know confidentially so that we can work with you regarding your treatment. We are here to support you.

What is Beaches Dental's view on Covid-19 Vaccination generally?

As mentioned above, at Beaches Dental we strongly encourage all our workers and patients to be fully vaccinated against Covid-19 as soon as possible. We support the Australian Government's reopening plan and our goal is to protect the health and safety of our team and patients as best we can.

Covid-19 vaccination is just one line of defence in the fight against the spread of Covid-19. At Beaches Dental, in addition to encouraging/supporting Covid-19 vaccination, we will continue to maintain our Covid-Safe Workplace Plans and may also introduce other controls to help keep you safe.

We cannot stress enough therefore how important it is that you make an informed vaccination decision.

How can Beaches Dental encourage Covid-19 Vaccination, isn't it a personal decision?

Covid-19 vaccination is a personal decision. However, Beaches Dental has a legal obligation to make decisions that protect the health and safety of our employees and patients when in our workplace. This includes the duty to eliminate (as far as practicable) the risk of exposure to Covid-19. That is why our decision at this stage is to strongly encourage vaccination, together with other Covid-safe workplace measures.

Why doesn't Beaches Dental force vaccinations rather than strongly encouraging them?

It may be the case in the future that Beaches Dental is required to impose a requirement to be vaccinated for staff and patients as a condition of attending our service. At this stage however, we are simply encouraging as many people as possible to be vaccinated.

From a legal perspective, the mandating of vaccines is a complex area and at this stage, Beaches Dental prefers to follow the relevant State based health advice/directions and focus on encouraging and supporting vaccines – rather than mandating them. Again, this may change as circumstances or the advice/directions change.

How will Beaches Dental be checking/enforcing vaccination status?

In the event further checks of vaccination statuses for our staff are required, we will be requesting for this information or evidence to be provided to us confidentially. The answers and information provided will be used and retained in accordance with our obligations under Privacy Laws and to ensure we can plan work allocation.

Where double vaccination is required to attend our service in the future, we reserve the right to require sufficient proof of vaccination status to be provided as a condition of entry into our service.

Will I need to wear a mask while at Beaches Dental?

In NSW masks will need to be worn at all times in the workplace by our staff – until advised otherwise by us in line with Government directions.

Subject to valid exemptions, our patients are also expected to wear masks for the duration of their stay in our clinic so long as they are not being treated or if it is not reasonable for them to wear one.

What other measures is Beaches Dental introducing to keep me safe?

As mentioned above, Covid-19 vaccination is one important tool in the fight against Covid-19 transmission.

However, it is important that you continue to follow other Covid-Safe measures at all times including:

- Checking in and out when entering venues and the workplace
- Using hand sanitiser regularly
- Wearing a mask and other personal protective equipment such as gloves where appropriate
- Washing your hands regularly and properly
- Maintaining social distance from others, including in the workplace
- Abiding by capacity limits
- Complying with other Government mandated directions (e.g. isolation directions, limits on gatherings, restrictions on certain local areas etc)
- Regular cleaning and sanitisation of surfaces and workplaces
- Avoiding the workplace and others when you feel unwell

We may introduce other Covid-safe controls from time to time and ask that you do all that you can to help keep yourself and others safe.

Where can I find more information about Covid-19, Vaccinations and other questions I may have?

If you have questions regarding our policies or workplace plans, please consult our practice manager or your dentist.

If you have any questions regarding Covid-19 or Vaccinations more broadly we have provided some links below to Government information sources.

We also strongly encourage you to consult with your GP to obtain personalised advice if you need it.

Fair Work – Corona Virus and Workplace Laws: <https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au>

Australian Federal Government Department of Health – Resources for Vaccination: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/covid-19-vaccination-patient-resources>

Safe Work Australia – Covid19 Information for Workplaces: <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces>

NSW Roadmap to Freedom: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/roadmap-to-freedom-unveiled-for-fully-vaccinated>

Version	Date Reviewed	Date Updated
1.0	17 December 2021	-