

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW residents report decline in overall health because of delayed health checks

Sydney, May 19, 2022 - The health of New South Wales residents has worsened throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic because of delayed medical appointments, tests or procedures, new research commissioned by the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies in Australia and New Zealand has found.

The research found a high number of people are still delaying medical care more than two years after the pandemic began, and 32 per cent of those who delayed a medical appointment reported worse mental health.

One in five reported the delay caused additional physical pain or found their condition worsened, while others reported strained relationships with family members, weight gain and negative impacts on personal finances.

The survey of over 2000 NSW residents found almost half delayed a medical appointment, test or procedure because of COVID-19 with the majority of those not rescheduling all of the skipped appointments.

Sixty per cent of those said high COVID-19 cases still deter them from attending medical appointments or accessing care.

As a way to inspire people to reprioritise their health, the Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies in Australia and New Zealand has launched [My Health Can't Wait New South Wales](#), a new resource hub designed to help patients and caregivers focus on their wellbeing and book an appointment with a healthcare professional. The hub aims to help individuals understand the urgency of addressing their health needs and recognise the potentially detrimental impact of delaying care.

Biljana Naumovic, Managing Director of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson in Australia and New Zealand, said there must be a greater push to get people back to their GPs and undertaking important health checks.

“We have campaigns to encourage people back into the CBD, incentives for them to explore cultural attractions and return to life as normal, but there’s no incentive to get people back to their doctor,” Ms Naumovic said.

“It’s 2022, and we still have a large number of NSW residents delaying important medical care. At Johnson & Johnson we know prevention is the best course of treatment, and these simple, fundamental health checks can be the difference between life and death.”

The Australian Medical Association (NSW) is also urging people to reprioritise their health.

“We know that delayed health checks lead to a greater risk of late-stage diagnoses, and increased morbidity and mortality down the track,” Dr Danielle McMullen, AMA (NSW) President, said.

“That is why it is vital that people reprioritise their health and come forward to get the care and the checks they need without delay. Health checks are such an important part of disease prevention and not only help you stay healthy but can improve your overall health and wellbeing.”

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Key findings from report:

- 48% of people surveyed in NSW had delayed a medical appointment because of COVID-19 and most (57%) skipped the appointments rather than rescheduled
- 32% of those who have delayed a medical appointment have reported worse mental health
- 85% felt COVID-19 was currently impacting the availability of health services they need, with those most likely to be experiencing impact being people having difficulty meeting everyday expenses
- 60% said high COVID-19 cases would deter them from attending medical appointments or accessing care, especially those from a CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) background (75%)
- 83% rated the efforts of nurses, doctors, and other frontline staff as excellent or good, making healthcare workers the highest performing part of the survey.
- 72% of those who have used Telehealth reported their experience as being either 'excellent' or 'good', (84%) wanted to see telehealth continued as an option for patients
- 60% of people rated waiting times for elective surgeries as 'poor' or 'very poor', making it the lowest-performing part of the survey.
- 81% say the health system should be better resourced so COVID-19 outbreaks do not require the suspension of elective surgeries.

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ABOUT THE RESEARCH

Johnson & Johnson Family of Companies commissioned SECNewgate Research to conduct research to explore the impact of COVID-19, and related policies, on the health of the NSW community and related behaviours. Results are based on a 15-minute online quantitative survey with a sample of 2003 NSW adults aged 18+. Participants were sourced by professional research panel Octopus, with fieldwork conducted between 14-21 February.