



STROKE RECOVERY
ASSOCIATION NSW

CLUB NEWS

Autumn 2025

FROM MICHELLE'S DESK

Hi all,

I trust you are all well. Our thoughts are with those of you who were impacted by the latest floods up on the Central Coast, Hunter and Mid North Coast. What a dreadful period that was for all involved. It is hard to imagine the devastation it has caused to so many people's lives and livelihoods.

My apologies that Club News is out late this quarter. We like many other organisations are struggling with the flu season and the new strain of COVID-19 that is circulating in the community. Remember that as a Stroke survivor, if you contract COVID-19 you are eligible for the anti-viral medication, so contact your GP as soon as you are aware that you have tested positive. The article on pages 2-3 gives you an overview of how to undertake the self-administered tests.

While at this point wearing masks at Clubs/groups and choirs is no longer mandatory, you may wish to consider whether you personally may need to wear one protect yourself. Many hospitals have now reinstated the requirement to wear masks when on their premises.

REMEMBER: If you have any flu-like symptoms **DO NOT** attend your Stroke Club/group/choir. Vaccination for COVID-19 is still a requirement to attend.

As we roll in to the second half of the year there are a number of events organised by the Association for you to attend. Check out the details on page 8 and add them to your diary. Most of the information will be sent out to you through your Club secretary or co-ordinator, however if that is not passed on at your meeting, feel free to give us a ring at the Association to find out how you can attend.

Stay safe and warm over the winter period. I hope to catch up with as many of you possible over the next few months as I continue to transition to retirement.

kind regards
Michelle



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News on YouTube



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1300 650 594



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Flu or COVID? A new RAT can test for both at home with a single swab

If you have respiratory symptoms as we head towards winter and flu season, could it be COVID or the flu? Or something else entirely?

Now, we have a range of home tests that can distinguish between flu and COVID with one swab. They use technology you might be used to, rapid antigen tests, or RATs.

Here's what you need to know about the tests, why they might be useful, and what they don't tell us. Most people were introduced to RATs while testing at home for COVID. However RATs to detect the flu have been available for years, albeit used by health workers to test patients.

The latest RATs are different for two reasons. One, they detect both COVID and flu with one swab (a "combo" test), and two, they can be used at home.

The first of these combo home tests for flu/COVID was approved in September 2022. Now several are on the market. These tests let you check, with one test kit, if you are infected with two types of flu (influenza A and B) and SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID).

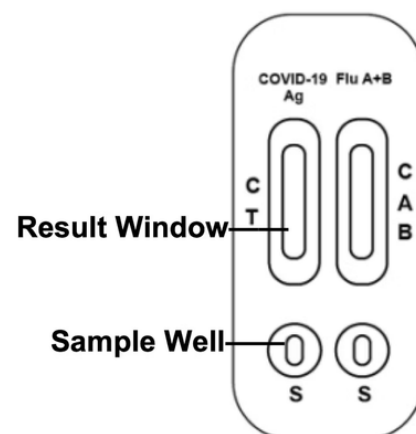
How do they work? These RATs contain antibodies that can detect influenza A, influenza B, and SARS-CoV-2. Some kits have a test cassette with one well to add drops to and one window labelled: C (control), A (influenza A), B (influenza B) and T (test for COVID).

Some tests have two results windows and one test well, some have two test wells and two test windows. You view the influenza results in one window and the COVID results in the other.

In the influenza window you will see markings C, A and B. If a line becomes visible at A (and C), you have tested positive for influenza A. If a line becomes visible at B (and C), you are positive for influenza B. If lines are visible at A, B and C you have tested positive for both influenza A and B.

If either A or B has a line but not C, or if none of them do, the test is invalid and you will need to take a new one.

The COVID window works the same way as in a standard RAT for COVID. If a line becomes visible at C and T, you are COVID-positive. If there is a line at C but not T, you are COVID-negative. If there is no line at C the test is invalid.



A black and white drawing of a RAT test with wells for flu or COVID.

Flu or COVID?

Why take the test?

The eligibility for subsidised COVID antivirals has widened. An additional 160,000 Australians are now able to access subsidised COVID-19 antiviral treatments after the federal government expanded eligibility criteria under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

If you have respiratory symptoms, there are some practical reasons for knowing whether you are positive for COVID or flu. There are three main reasons:

- 1.If you know you have COVID, this will affect the timing of your booster vaccine. The Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation recommends adults wait six months after a COVID infection to get a booster to increase the time you have protective immunity. So it helps to know if you have been infected.
- 2.If you need antiviral treatment, the medications differ depending on whether you have flu or COVID.
- 3.Knowing you have flu or COVID means you can take steps to protect others. This could mean working at home, avoiding contact with vulnerable people, and wearing a mask in company.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) lists approved tests on its website. Type the term "combination" in the search box. All combo tests currently listed use nasal swabs to collect the sample. Most are listed as "very high sensitivity". This means they get the same result in detecting positive cases as the gold standard PCR test 95 per cent of the time. The others have "high sensitivity" (90 per cent agreement with a PCR).

The best time to take the test is within four days of developing symptoms, as this is when it is easiest to detect both flu and COVID. The tests are more reliable if you have symptoms.

What if I have symptoms but the test is negative?

One possibility is that your viral load was not high enough to be detected. You could take another test a day or so later to check again.

Another is you may have a different virus. Viruses that cause respiratory symptoms include rhinoviruses, adenoviruses, respiratory syncytial virus and common cold coronaviruses. Other pathogens (disease-causing microorganisms) or health conditions can also cause respiratory symptoms. If you are concerned, consult your doctor for medical advice.

Reprinted from: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-26/covid-flu-new-rat-test-can-diagnose-both/102261392>

Music Therapy in Stroke Recovery



Brainwaves - Newcastle

Have you ever considered joining one of our choirs?

Music therapy offers an engaging and interactive approach to assist individuals in achieving their personal objectives.

The Stroke Recovery Choirs often focus on enhancing social interactions, communication abilities, emotional wellness, and cognitive capabilities.

Through a music-centred therapy approach, members not only benefit from therapeutic support but also have the chance to cultivate musical talents, nurture creative thinking, and integrate music into their daily routines to enrich their overall quality of life.

Moreover, the efficacy of music therapy extends to various medical conditions. It has been shown to alleviate dysphagia and aphasia, enhance cognitive function and motor skills, mitigate negative emotions, and expedite neurological recovery among individuals recovering from strokes.



Online Choir

Why not harvest these benefits of music therapy by joining one of our incredible Stroke Choirs near you?

All of our sessions are specifically facilitated by an accredited music therapist.

For more information, contact the association on 1300 650 594



KeyStrokes - Sydney

Puzzles

Can you find all of the words below?

P	N	Y	H	E	R	S	T	V	O	E	D	O	V
P	P	S	E	I	C	A	S	B	R	A	B	A	A
R	E	V	A	E	E	A	R	E	A	T	B	T	N
E	O	R	C	B	R	R	C	O	N	V	R	R	N
V	N	S	K	B	R	N	G	S	V	T	A	R	E
E	H	I	U	T	E	A	G	A	T	I	I	S	O
N	T	R	M	T	C	N	R	P	T	R	N	F	P
T	T	R	R	I	O	N	V	H	E	M	O	R	R
I	A	P	S	R	V	S	R	A	E	V	A	K	E
O	O	R	T	E	E	V	Y	S	G	E	A	V	E
N	S	S	R	O	R	A	E	I	R	V	T	R	K
C	A	R	E	R	Y	R	I	A	V	K	A	U	N
T	E	I	R	E	D	A	R	A	M	A	C	O	A
I	N	S	U	R	V	I	V	O	R	M	E	R	T

STROKE
BRAIN
CARER

FITNESS
CAMARADERIE
SURVIVOR
RECOVERY

APHASIA
STRONG
PREVENTION

Around the Clubs

Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai

Our Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Club enjoyed a stunning day on the Hawksbury aboard the Riverboat Postman. The iconic cruise delivers mail and essentials to water-access-only residents whilst providing stories of the river and a lunch for those on board. It was a fabulous outing enjoyed by all.

The Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai Club meets every Friday from 10am - 12pm at Pennant Hills Community Health Center, For more information please contact 1300 650 594.



Online Groups

The Stroke Recovery Association runs online groups throughout the month that cover a range of topics and special events.

The online choir is run every Monday 2-3pm by a trained music therapist. Maitland Aphasia open their group to online participants every Friday from 10am-12pm and have a speech pathologist attend to facilitate the group every second week. Once a month we run a Topical Tuesday presenting on a special topic of interest, as well as a trivia and brain training once a month. We also run Beyond Stroke monthly where we discuss varying topics of importance to Stroke Survivors. There is also a carers group every second month.

You can register by scanning the QR Code below.



Around the Clubs

Wagga Wagga

The Wagga Wagga group has continued to rapidly expand in size over the past few years from 2 people into double digits! The group has a strong regular attendance and has recently changed their executive. They are grateful for the ongoing support and free room hire from Wagga RSL, who provide them with space each month.

The group meets monthly on the 4th Wednesday of each month at Wagga RSL at 10am. For more information, please contact the Association on 1300 650 594.



Sydney Working Age Group

The Sydney Working Age Group (SWAG) is a growing endeavour that expands the former Young Stroke Group to include all Stroke Survivors from 18 to 65. The group meets every second month at various locations around Sydney. Members enjoyed their meetings this year at El Camino Manly and Betty's Burgers Circular Quay, which allowed them to enjoy the natural beauty whilst eating and talking. Some members followed their lunch with a harbourside walk. The Group look forward to continuing to get together and discussing the unique experiences that come with being a Working Age Stroke Survivor.


The group next meets at 12.30pm on Saturday 7th July at Doodee King, Chatswood. Please contact Lani on 1300 650 594 for more information or to register.



Upcoming Events



2025 EVENTS

26 JUNE THURSDAY	SYDNEY STROKE OLYMPICS Club Burwood RSL	
2 AUGUST SATURDAY	COMBINED CLUBS MORNING TEA Diggers The Entrance	
STROKE AWARENESS WEEK NSW SUN 7 - SAT 13 SEPTEMBER		
12 SEPTEMBER FRIDAY	CREATING CONNECTIONS STROKE CONFERENCE Club Burwood RSL	
14 OCTOBER TUESDAY	HUNTER STROKE OLYMPICS Raymond Terrace Bowling Club	
7 NOVEMBER FRIDAY	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Club Burwood RSL	
14 NOVEMBER FRIDAY	COMBINED CLUBS PICNIC Wentworth Commons, Homebush	



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Contributions

We welcome contributions to Club News, especially in our "Around the Clubs" section of the newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to events@strokensw.org.au.

Contributions may be edited, either to reduce size, to assist with readability, or for legal/liability reasons. To include something in our next Club News, please send it into our office before **31 July 2025**.

Memorial gifts & bequests

A bequest is a gift in your will. If you would like to consider how you can include the Stroke Recovery Association NSW as a beneficiary in your will, please contact the office at admin@strokensw.org.au or on 1300 650 594.

We can also supply 'In Memoriam' donation brochures with pre-paid addressed envelopes for use at memorial services.

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