

Everything you need to know about Coronavirus (COVID-19)



What is coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a new virus that can cause illnesses in people, ranging from common cold to more severe respiratory illness. The most recent Coronavirus causes Coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

This information sheet is based on information from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website on 23 March 2020. For the latest information visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

How does coronavirus spread?

COVID-19 spreads through close contact with an infected person; mostly face-to-face or within a household.

What is close contact? Close contact means greater than 15 minutes face-to-face or the sharing of a closed space for more than two hours with a confirmed case.

If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, stay at home and separate yourself from other people. To find out more about close contact visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

What can you do to reduce your risk of coronavirus infection?

- Practice physical distancing or keep 1.5 metres distance between yourself and others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
- Stay at home if you feel sick. If you take medication make sure you have enough.
- Continue healthy habits: don't smoke, get regular exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep.
- Buy an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 percent alcohol.
- Wearing a face mask is not necessary if you are well.

Why is it important to practice physical distancing?

Physical distancing or social distancing means keeping 1.5 metres distance between yourself and others. It is a way to control or slow the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19. COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:



- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.



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For more information and steps to practice physical distancing visit:

<https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/03/coronavirus-covid-19-information-on-social-distancing.pdf>

Coronavirus (Covid-19) and overseas travellers

What if I have recently travelled from overseas?

If you:

- arrived in Australia from midnight 15 March 2020, or
- think you may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus,
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you have to to self-quarantine (self-isolate) for 14 days.

This means:

When you arrive, you must travel directly from the airport to your home or a place where you can remain quarantined in for 14 days.

Except in exceptional circumstances, you must stay there from the day of arrival until midnight on the 14th day after your arrival.

You must not leave the premises, except:

- For the purposes of obtaining medical care or medical supplies
- In an emergency situation
- In circumstances where it is possible to avoid close contact with other persons.

You must not allow any other person to enter the premises unless that person usually lives there, or the other person is also in self-quarantine (self-isolation) for the same 14-day period, or they are there for medical or emergency purposes.

For more information visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#u-self-quarantineu>





Important information for overseas travellers

From 9:00pm on 20 March 2020, you cannot enter Australia unless you are:

- An Australian citizen
- A permanent resident of Australia
- A New Zealand citizen usually resident in Australia
- An immediate family member of an Australian citizen or permanent resident.

For the most up-to-date information on travel restrictions, visit the [Smart Traveller website](#)

What are the penalties for not complying with these self-quarantine requirements?

Under the State of Emergency in Victorian, if you ignore this direction you will have to pay fines of up to approximately \$20,000, or up to approximately \$100,000 in the case of companies and other bodies.

What if I'm from overseas and I'm not eligible for Medicare?

Overseas travellers who fall ill in Australia (and are not eligible for Medicare) often have health or travel insurance.

If you do not have the right insurance coverage and you are suspected to have coronavirus:

- You will not have to pay the costs of treatment.
- You will not have to pay for ambulance transfers if you are taken to Victorian hospitals for assessment.

We are doing this to ensure payment issues are not a barrier for people from overseas with symptoms seeking early medical advice.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

Most people who contract COVID-19 will suffer only mild symptoms. However early indications are that the elderly and people with pre-existing medical conditions are more at risk of experiencing severe symptoms.

The most common coronavirus symptoms reported include:

- Fever
- Breathing difficulties such as breathlessness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fatigue or tiredness.

Who is most at risk of coronavirus?

- Overseas travellers and close contacts
- Elderly or have pre-existing medical conditions
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

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I am feeling unwell, what should I do?

If you are in any of the risk categories and begin to feel unwell and develop a fever or shortness of breath, a cough or respiratory illness either during your period of isolation or in 14 days since arriving home from international travel, you should seek immediate medical attention:

- Call ahead to your GP or emergency department and mention your overseas travel before you arrive at the doctor's office so they can prepare appropriate infection control measures.
- Call the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 398 for advice. This number is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

If you have serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call 000 and ask for an ambulance. Tell the operator your recent travel history.

Where are the coronavirus assessment centres?

Assessment centres have been established in a number of hospitals in Melbourne. Patients who have symptoms compatible with COVID-19 may present to these assessment centres. To find a centre closest to you, visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#where-are-the-coronavirus-assessment-centres>

For more translated information in your language, visit: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/translated-resources/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

For more information, visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

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