

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Factsheet for the Victorian public

Last updated: 03 March 2020

If you think you may have coronavirus disease, please call the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 389. This hotline is serviced by Nurse-on-Call. Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies.

What is coronavirus disease?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle Eastern Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

This coronavirus disease is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Am I at risk?

At this time, anyone who has been in Iran or mainland China or mainland China (excluding Hong Kong SAR, Macau and Taiwan) in the past 14 days or is a close or casual contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 is at the highest risk of infection.

Visit dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus for the current information on risks.

Who is most vulnerable?

Experience tells us that people with compromised immune systems, the very old and young and those with diagnosed heart and lung conditions are most at risk of developing complications if they contract an infection like coronavirus infection.

What should I do if I am at risk?

If you are in one of the two risk groups listed above:

- Stay at home (self-quarantine)
- Avoid public settings - this means you should not attend work, school, childcare or university or go to other public places such as restaurants, cinemas or shopping centres and should not use public transport or taxis

Do this for 14 days after leaving mainland China, or when coming into close contact with a person that has coronavirus disease (other than when seeking medical care).

What are the symptoms of coronavirus disease?

People with coronavirus disease are most likely to have a fever, and may have respiratory symptoms like a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath. Not all people with the disease will have a fever.

How does coronavirus disease spread?

Health authorities around the world believe the virus is spread through close contact with people carrying the virus. There is evidence that people are infectious before they begin to show symptoms of the virus, however they are likely to be most infectious for the first few days of illness.

What is the Victorian Government doing about this problem?

Victoria has a world-class hospital system that is well-prepared and ready to deal with cases of infection.

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services is working with health authorities across Australia and the world to monitor and track the situation. Work is underway to adapt pandemic plans and to develop responses to this infection should there be an escalation in infections seen in Australia.

What should I do if I think I might have been infected with coronavirus disease?

If you are ill and have travelled to mainland China, including Hubei Province, in the 14 days before becoming sick, you should phone your doctor before attending a clinic.

If there is a risk of infection, your doctor will perform a test to determine if you have coronavirus disease.

Can my child go to school?

Advice for attendance at schools, early childhood education services and TAFEs and training providers is available from the Department of Education at [education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/department/Pages/coronavirus.aspx).

How do I protect myself and my family?

The best way to protect yourself and your family is to pay attention to good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or cough into your elbow, dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards. Wash your hands regularly, after using the toilet and before eating.

If you have concerns about your health, please see your doctor.

Healthcare workers are advised to use appropriate infection prevention control measures when looking after patients.

Do I need to wear a face mask?

Face masks are not recommended for use by members of the public in Victoria for the prevention of infections like coronavirus disease.

Where can I find current travel advice?

Check the Smart Traveller website for current travel restrictions and advice: smartraveller.gov.au

Where can I find out more information?

For Victorian updates to the current incident, go to: [dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus)

For national updates: [health.gov.au/news/latest-information-about-novel-coronavirus](https://www.health.gov.au/news/latest-information-about-novel-coronavirus)

For international updates: [who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus](https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus)

WHO resources [who.int/health-topics/coronavirus](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus)