

Myth busting - Novel Coronavirus

Edited 21 February 2020 - this article has been updated to reflect the change of naming for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/blog/blogcollectionpage/novel-coronavirus-mythbusting>

What we know: the facts about coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

In late 2019 cases of [coronavirus disease](#) started to be reported. There have been some cases in Victoria, and the Department of Health and Human Services has worked closely with the Victorian health sector, Commonwealth and international agencies to help keep people safe, healthy and informed.

However, many myths have sprung up as cases have increased. It's important that we do some myth busting, so you and your loved ones know how to respond to coronavirus disease in Victoria.

Spread of infection

You might be worried about catching coronavirus disease and wondering if you should stay at home.

The spread of coronavirus disease occurs through close contact with an infected person, mostly face-to-face or within a household. Although it can be spread from a cough or sneeze in droplets for a few metres, it cannot be carried for long distances in the air so we should all go about our lives as normal.

People of all ages can be infected by coronavirus disease. Older people, and people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) appear to be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with the virus.

Unless you are in one of the groups required to isolate (self-quarantine), you can go about your life as normal.

Wearing facemasks

You may have seen more people in public wearing face masks and wondered if you should also be wearing one and providing them to your family.

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

If you want to be cautious you can choose to wear one. However, should you find that these items are expensive or hard to access, please be aware that there is currently no recommendation that you should be wearing one.

Prevention and the cure

You may have seen posts on social media or overheard conversations about what prevents and cures coronavirus disease. Suggestions we've seen include yoga, using herbs or oil, gargling mouthwash or rinsing your nose with saline. All these things can be beneficial for general health and wellbeing; however, you should question any suggestion of their benefit in the prevention or cure of coronavirus disease.

To date, there is no specific medicine recommended to prevent or treat coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Your best protection is good hand hygiene and good respiratory hygiene. So wash your hands, and cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.

Where to stay up to date

You can stay up to date by visiting the [Department of Health and Human Services website](#). There you'll find advice and resources. If you suspect you may have the novel coronavirus, please call the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 398.