



Information for close contacts of a confirmed case

You have been identified as having had close contact with someone diagnosed with Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Someone from your local public health unit will be in contact with you daily while you are at risk of infection to monitor you for symptoms. You must isolate yourself in your home for 14 days after last contact with the confirmed case. Please read this information carefully.

What does isolate yourself in your home mean?

People who are recommended to be isolated should not attend public places, in particular work, school, childcare or university. Only people who usually live in the household should be in the home. Do not allow visitors into the home. There is no need to wear masks in the home. Where possible, get others such as friends or family, who are not required to be isolated, to get food or other necessities for you. If you must leave the home, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask if you have one.

What is a coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS). This new coronavirus (called SARS-COV-2) originated in Hubei Province, China. The virus causes coronavirus disease 2019, commonly known as COVID-19.

How is the infection spread?

The infection 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, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated with virus-laden mucus from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms. These can include fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath.

Close contacts of a person with a confirmed infection (such as people staying in the same house or sharing a closed space for a prolonged length of time) are most at risk of infection.

For how long can a person spread the infection to other people?

The length of time that a person is infectious, that is, can spread the infection to others, is not yet known. However, there has been emerging evidence of asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic infection and pre-symptomatic transmission. It is possible a person can spread the infection from before the time they first develop symptoms until up to one day after symptoms stop.

Who is most at risk of a serious illness?

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly. From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at most risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. because of cancer)
- elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness
- people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions
- very young children and babies*
- people in group residential settings
- people in detention facilities.

*At this stage the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children relative to the broader population.

What do I do if I develop symptoms?

If you develop symptoms (fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath) within 14 days of last contact with a confirmed case, you should arrange to see your doctor for urgent assessment.

You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them your travel history or that you may have been in contact with a potential case of coronavirus. You must remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

How is the infection treated?

There is no specific treatment for coronaviruses. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections. Most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care.

How can we help prevent the spread of the infection?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 meters from people).

Should I wear a face mask?

You do not need to wear a mask if you are healthy. While the use of masks can help to prevent transmission of disease from infected patients to others, masks are not currently recommended for use by healthy members of the public for the prevention of infections like coronavirus.

Where can I get more information?

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.