

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – What you need to know

Below is some important information about how to protect yourself against infection and prevent the virus spreading.

Keeping Australians safe from the coronavirus is the Government's number one priority. This will be a challenging time but it will be temporary. By working together, practising good hygiene and maintaining appropriate social distancing, Australia will overcome this public health challenge.

PLEASE NOTE: because the situation is rapidly evolving, it is important to always check the most up-to-date medical information at [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au).

Protecting yourself and others

It's important to **practise good hygiene and social distancing** to protect against infection and to prevent the virus from spreading. You can prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections by making sure you:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Cover your cough/sneeze and dispose of tissues
- Avoid contact with others if you're feeling unwell
- Avoid large gatherings if they're not essential
- Keep a distance of 1.5 meters between you and other people whenever possible
- Minimise unnecessary physical contact with others, especially those at higher risk, such as older people and people with existing health conditions
- Read the Department of Health's guidance on social distancing [here](#).

Staying informed

- It's important to keep up-to-date with accurate and reliable information about coronavirus as the situation develops. The best place to find the latest information is at [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au).
- Additional resources, including specific fact sheets and guidelines for **parents, older Australians** and **international travellers**, can be found at <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-resources>.

Should I get tested?

You should be tested for COVID-19 if:

- you are experiencing cold and flu symptoms and have recently returned from overseas; or
- you have been in direct contact with someone who is known to have contracted coronavirus.
- Additional testing may also be appropriate for healthcare workers.

Mass gatherings and social distancing

- From Monday 16 March, the National Cabinet agreed that non-essential organised mass gatherings of more than 500 people should not occur.
- These measures should **not** prevent the operation of essential functions including schools, universities and workplaces, or prevent the operation of public transport.
- However, the principle of social distancing should still apply in these settings.
- Read the Department of Health's guidance on social distancing [here](#).

Travelling overseas?

- Regardless of your destination, age or health, if your overseas travel is not essential, you should consider carefully whether now is the right time.
- This is because the health risks from the global COVID-19 pandemic are increasing, you may be more exposed to contracting COVID-19 overseas, and overseas travel has become more complex and unpredictable.
- The Government has upgraded its Smartraveller travel advice for all Australians travelling overseas to level 3 - 'reconsider your need for overseas travel at this time.'
- For more information, visit the [Smartraveller website](#).

Support available for households and businesses

- The Government has recently announced a \$17.6 billion economic stimulus package to keep Australians in jobs, keep businesses in business and support households and the Australian economy.
- This package has four parts:

- Cash flow assistance to help small and medium sized business to stay in business and keep their employees in jobs;
 - Support for business investment;
 - Targeted support for the most severely affected sectors, regions and communities; and
 - Household stimulus payments to strengthen the broader economy. The Government will provide a one-off \$750 payment to age pensioners and other social security, veteran and other income support recipients and eligible concession card holders. This will be paid automatically from 31 March 2020.
- For more information on the Government's **Economic Response to the Coronavirus** visit treasury.gov.au/coronavirus.

Other key contacts:

- If you're unsure about what to do, call the **Coronavirus Health Information Line** (operating 24/7) on **1800 020 080**.
- For travel advice visit <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/>