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> Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) latest Northern Territory specific updates

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) latest Northern Territory specific updates

We are prepared for a potential coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic spreading to the Territory.

People should be alert, but not alarmed.

Ongoing research and evidence suggests that COVID-19 presents as a mild illness in the majority of cases, with fever and cough being the most commonly reported symptoms.

Severe illness and fatalities occur more often in people who are older, have chronic conditions (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension) or are immunocompromised (e.g. cancer, renal disease). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may also be at increased risk.

We are opening a pandemic clinic at the Royal Darwin Hospital and are planning more across the Territory. These clinics will test and treat patients away from hospital Emergency Departments.

There is no need to stockpile food or toilet paper. However, you may want to have a few weeks of essential items such as regular medications in case you become unwell and cannot leave your home except to seek medical treatment.

If you are well, you do not need to wear a mask unless you have been advised to do so by a medical provider. Surgical masks in the community are only helpful in preventing people who are suspected or have COVID-19 from spreading it to others.

We all have a part to play in reducing the risk of getting sick and stopping the spread of infections:

- Stay home from work and school if you are unwell (e.g. don't go shopping or use public transport until you are well).
- Avoid contact with others if you are sick (particularly vulnerable people such as older persons and people with chronic medical conditions).
- If others are sick, keep your distance from them as much as possible (at least 1.5 metres), avoid close contact such as shaking hands, hugging, kissing.
- Wash hands regularly, particularly after going to the toilet, blowing your nose or handling used tissues.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a clean tissue or your elbow.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, or handling food, until you have washed your hands.
- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces.

For the latest health information on the coronavirus, go to the Australian Government's [Department of Health website](#) [↗](#). Fact sheets for the general public, health professionals and industry are also available on this website.

The World Health Organization has put together myth busting information for the public. To find out more, go to [World Health Organization website](#) [↗](#).

Latest updates

9 March 2020

The most important thing for everyone to remember with COVID-19 is to maintain strict hygiene by:

- Washing your hands
- Avoid shaking hands with people who may be unwell
- Stay at a distance of 1.5 m away from someone who is unwell
- Coughing or sneezing into your elbow
- Don't go to crowded places if you're unwell including staying home from school or work.

There is 1 confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Territory as at today – this person is located in Darwin. There are no other confirmed cases anywhere else in the Territory.

The two fishermen who were on the same flight as the 52-year-old man with a confirmed COVID-19 infection from the QF840 flight from Sydney on Tuesday remain well and pose no risk to the community.

Tomorrow we will have the first Pandemic Clinic open for testing on the campus of Royal Darwin Hospital.

Testing is done at the Royal Darwin Hospital Pathology Laboratory and results are usually available within 24 hours.

In other regions, including Alice Springs, we are establishing similar clinics to support GPs and in the remote communities we are establishing processes for managing and testing anyone who may have the infection.

All updates area available on www.securent.nt.gov.au [↗](#) and [SecureNT Facebook](#) [↗](#)

7 March 2020

NT Health has continued to trace all those people considered close contacts of the 52-year-old man with COVID-19 infection from the QF840 flight from Sydney on Tuesday to advise them to self-isolate.

Two of the close contacts were on a fishing trip near Maningrida and were flown by Careflight into Darwin yesterday evening. They are now in self-isolation - they will remain in isolation for 14 days from last Tuesday, 3 March.

Community safety remains our highest priority. We ask the public to be alert, but not alarmed.

Practising good hand hygiene and remembering to cough or sneeze into your elbow is still the best way to minimise the spread of any infection.

5 March 2020

On 4 March a 52-year-old man tested positive for COVID-19 in Darwin, becoming the first confirmed case in the Northern Territory.

“The man, an Australian from New South Wales is visiting Darwin, having arrived on Tuesday 3 March aboard QANTAS flight QF840 from Sydney,” said Deputy Chief Health Officer Dianne Stephens.

“On arrival, he drove to the Woolworths complex in Darwin CBD before checking in to his accommodation at the Ramada on Wyndham. It is understood that he was then advised that a former travelling companion had tested positive interstate, and so he immediately self-isolated and contacted health authorities.

“He was tested at a local GP where all the precautions were taken, and otherwise remained in his hotel room until the test

results were confirmed, at which point he drove himself to RDH, where he was met by the PHU and admitted and remains in isolation.”

The Top End Health Service Public Health Unit is undertaking contact tracing of all the passengers on the flight and others who may have come into close contact with the man. People who were on the flight, staying at the accommodation or who visited the Woolworths complex are advised to monitor their health. They are not required to self-isolate or get tested unless they develop any respiratory symptoms.

“If symptoms develop, contact your General Practitioner who will arrange for to you to be tested,” Dr Stephens said.

“The public is reminded to be alert, but not alarmed, there is no need to panic buy supplies or to wear a mask unless you become ill. Practice good hand hygiene, remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, and avoid touching your face. That remains the best way to minimise the spread of any infection.”

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Howard Springs residents

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Remote community residents

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Last updated: 09 March 2020

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