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Coronavirus COVID-19 daily update

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This Chief Health Officer update is intended to provide clinicians and the Victorian public with information about the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Victoria as well as relevant public health response activities in Victoria. Chief Health Officer Alerts will continue to be issued when there are changes to the public health advice related to COVID-19.

23/03/2020

What's new?

- As of 0930hrs 23 March 2020, Victoria has 355 total confirmed cases, and no deaths.
- Overnight the Prime Minister and the Chief Medical Officer announced significant new restrictions on gatherings. The Victoria Government will be working to implement these restrictions over the coming weeks and months.
- Victoria implement a shutdown of all non-essential activity across the state at 1200 today.
- Essential services include health services, supermarkets, banks, pharmacies, petrol stations and convenience stores. Freight, logistics and home delivery are also considered essential and will remain open.
- School holidays will be brought forward in Victoria, starting on Tuesday 24 March.
- New restrictions have been introduced to reduce the spread of coronavirus into hospitals by people who may pose a risk and do not have an important reason to be there.

Additional directions for non-essential business, aged care facilities and mass gatherings

- A direction for [non-essential business closure](#) was signed by the Deputy Chief Health Officer

today in accordance with emergency powers arising from the declared state of emergency. This direction states a person who owns, controls or operates a non-essential business or undertaking in Victoria must not operate from noon on 23 March 2020.

- This follows directions for [aged care](#) and [mass gatherings](#) that were signed on 21 March 2020. The [Aged Care Directions](#) make provision for restricted access to residential aged care facilities to limit the spread of COVID-19 within a particularly vulnerable population.

Additional directions for aged care facilities and mass gatherings

- Additional directions for [aged care](#) and [mass gatherings](#) were signed by the Deputy Chief Health Officer in accordance with emergency powers arising from the declared state of emergency on 21 March 2020. The [Aged Care Directions](#) make provision for restricted access to residential aged care facilities to limit the spread of COVID-19 within a particularly vulnerable population.
- The [Mass Gatherings Directions \(no 2\)](#) replace the mass gatherings Directions made on 18 March 2020. These directions prohibit non-essential mass-gatherings in order to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Updated GP quick reference guide and the Guidelines for health services and practitioners

The Quick Reference guide and the guidelines for health services and practitioners are continuously updated as the situation evolves. Please ensure you have the latest version from our website. See the Victorian [COVID-19 website](#) for current case definition, guidance and testing recommendations.

Restrictions on hospital visitors and workers

New restrictions have been introduced to reduce the spread of coronavirus into hospitals by people who may pose a risk and do not have an important reason to be there.

All visitors can expect to be screened on entry and cannot visit if they:

- have been diagnosed with coronavirus and have not been discharged from isolation
- have arrived in Australia within 14 days of your planned visit
- have recently come into contact with a person who has a confirmed case of coronavirus
- have a temperature over 37.5 degrees or symptoms of acute respiratory infection.

The only people who may enter hospitals for work purposes are:

- a person who is an employee or contractor of the hospital
- a student under the supervision of an employee or contractor of the hospital
- a person providing health, medical or pharmaceutical goods or services to a patient of the hospital (whether paid or voluntary)

- a person providing goods or services necessary for the effective operation of the hospital (whether paid or voluntary)
- union and employer representatives
- a person involved in emergency management or law enforcement
- a person who enters an area of the hospital exempted from the restriction.

Key messages

- People are prohibited from organising or attending non-essential mass gatherings, or to allow them to occur on premises they own, control or operate. Venues that don't comply with these new directions on mass gatherings face fines of up to \$100,000. People who don't comply face fines of up to \$20,000.
- The Victorian Government is working with the Australian Government to ensure that all vital personal protective equipment supplies are appropriately distributed to where they are needed across the Victorian health system.
- The Victorian Government has declared a State of Emergency in Victoria.
- The [State of Emergency](#) provides the Chief Health Officer with powers to enforce 14-day quarantine for all Australians returning to Australia and to do whatever is necessary to contain the spread of the virus and reduce the risk to the health of Victorians.
- Notification is required, by telephone, for all confirmed cases via 1300 651 160, immediately 24 hours per day.
- From 9pm 20 March 2020, any Australians returning from any country outside Australia should now be considered at risk and are required to self-isolate for 14 days.
- All close contacts of confirmed cases will be contacted by the department and told to home quarantine for 14 days.
- Any healthcare or residential aged care worker with a fever or respiratory symptoms should be tested.
- All Australians are now advised not to travel overseas at this time regardless of destination, age or health.
- Australians who are already overseas and wish to return home are advised to return as soon as possible.
- Anyone arriving in Australia from overseas, including Australian citizens and permanent residents will be required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of arrival.

More information

Clinical information

[Health services and general practice - coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Consumer information

[About Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - information for the general public](#)

[World Health Organization - health topic - Coronavirus](#) 

[Smartraveller website](#) 

Contacts

A public information hotline is provided by Nurse-on-Call – 1800 675 398.

Medical practitioners needing clinical information or to notify suspected or confirmed cases can contact the Department of Health and Human Services Communicable Diseases Section on 1300 651 160 (24 hours).

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Contact

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The department acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

The department is committed to safe and inclusive work places, policies and services for people of LGBTIQ communities and their families.

