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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.

16/04/2020

What's new?

Developments in the outbreak

- As of 16 April 2020, Victoria has 1301 total confirmed cases, an increase of 2 since yesterday. 39 people are in hospital, including 18 people in intensive care. 14 people have died. 132 cases have an unknown source of infection, an increase of 1 since yesterday. 1137 people have recovered. More than 73,000 Victorians have been tested.
- Up-to-date [epidemiological data](#)  is available on our website.

Current advice to clinicians

- Clinicians are advised to only test patients who meet the clinical testing criteria. There should be no exceptions.
- Revised testing criteria include:
 - Fever OR chills in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that explains the clinical presentation

OR

Acute respiratory infection that is characterised by cough, sore throat or shortness of breath.

- **Note:** In addition, testing is recommended for people with new onset of other clinical symptoms consistent with COVID-19* AND who are close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 or who have returned from overseas in the past 14 days.

*headache, myalgia, runny or stuffy nose, anosmia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea

- Doctors requesting COVID-19 testing are asked to ensure that a current contact phone number for the patient is included on all pathology request forms.
- Healthcare workers and other frontline employees will be able to have their test results returned faster. Specimens taken from health care workers should be marked:
 - **URGENT- Health Care Worker**
 - In the case of testing for return-to-work criteria for healthcare and aged care workers, mark with 'URGENT: HCW CLEARANCE TESTING, please notify result to DHHS'
 - Results should be copied to the DHHS COVID-19 Response and the HCW's treating physician.
- The evidence regarding the risks for pregnant healthcare workers is not yet clear. A precautionary approach is therefore recommended.
 - Before 28 weeks' gestation (in the first and second trimester of pregnancy), avoid areas where there are suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and clinical areas such as theatre, respiratory wards, intensive care and high dependency units or any other areas where aerosol generating procedures are performed.
 - After 28 weeks' gestation you should not be in roles with direct patient contact and in all situations, avoid contact with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Encourage patients to continue to proactively manage chronic illnesses, take routine tests and attend health services.
- Remind patients in at-risk groups of the importance of being tested if they have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Advise patients that smoking may increase the severity of symptoms if they contract coronavirus. Offer support and information to quit.
- Please reinforce the advice to Victorians to stay home and stay safe.
- Be aware of the increased risk for family violence during this difficult time. Familiarise yourself with the [services available for your patients](#).
- Look for signs of mental distress in your patients and encourage them to take a look at our [coronavirus mental health webpage](#)

Key messages

- The rules are clear - Stay home. Protect the health system. Save lives.
- There are only four reasons to leave home:
 - shopping for what you need - food and essential supplies

- medical, care or compassionate needs
- exercise in compliance with the public gathering requirements
- work and study if you can't work or learn remotely.

Current directions arising from the declared state of emergency

The State of Emergency in Victoria has been extended until midnight 11 May 2020.

The current directions remain in place and include: staying at home, restrictions on particular activities, detention, restrictions on airports and cruise ships, aged care, hospitals and isolation for people diagnosed with COVID-19

More information viewed at the department's [website](#). The site also contains a page of [frequently asked questions](#) providing further guidance on the directions.

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

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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Address: 50 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
3000

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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.



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