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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 coronavirus (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 coronavirus (COVID-19).

26/08/2020

What's new?

- As of 26 August 2020, the total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases in Victoria is 18,608.
- 149 new cases have been diagnosed since yesterday.
- Of the new cases, 47 are linked to outbreaks or complex cases and 102 are under investigation.
- There are 4,116 cases that may indicate community transmission.
- 578 people are in hospital. This includes 39 patients in intensive care.
- Sadly, there have been 24 new deaths reported since yesterday. To date, 462 people have died from coronavirus (COVID-19) in Victoria.
- There are 3,488 cases currently active in Victoria. 14,572 people have recovered.
- A total of 2,132,679 test results have been received. This is an increase of 13,480 since yesterday.
- You can find further details in today's [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) media release](#).
- The DHHS website has [up-to-date epidemiological data](#) available. See full details in the [interactive daily report](#).
- The Victorian Government has invested more than \$14.7 million in 17 projects dedicated to

fighting coronavirus (COVID-19) conducted by Victoria's leading medical research institutes and universities. This funding has already resulted in a consortium led by the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute using antibodies to prevent coronavirus from infecting cells under laboratory conditions. This could lead to the development of antibody-based therapies, a key potential therapy, especially for those who may not produce a strong immune response to infection.

Current advice to clinicians

- You can now notify the department of a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19) online. You can submit an [online form](#) to our public health team, rather than calling us, saving you time and resolving your case load more efficiently.
- The online form is available on the [DHHS website](#) as well as the Health.vic website.
- [Information for healthcare workers](#) about priority testing and other supports and assistance is on the DHHS website. This includes advice on self-isolation, quarantine and emergency accommodation.
- It is now a requirement that staff who are directly involved in treating patients must wear eye protection. The DHHS website has more information on [personal protective equipment](#).
- Practitioners should test any patients who meet the clinical criteria below:

Fever OR chills in the absence of an alternative diagnosis that explains the clinical presentation*

OR

Acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, anosmia or loss of smell or loss of taste)

Note: testing is also recommended for people with new onset of other clinical symptoms consistent with coronavirus (COVID-19)** AND who are close contacts of a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19); who have returned from overseas in the past 14 days; or who are healthcare or aged care workers.

**Clinical discretion applies including consideration of the potential for co-infection (e.g. concurrent infection with SARS-CoV-2 and influenza)*

***headache, myalgia, stuffy nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea*

- If referring your patients for coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, a list of testing locations can be found on the [getting tested for coronavirus page](#).
- The Department of Health and Human Services will continue distributing masks to eligible Victorians. General practices can place orders for these masks. More information is available on the [reusable face masks page](#).

Risk of strap tear in BYD N95 respirators

- There have been reports from other jurisdictions that small tears may occur when pulling/adjusting the headband straps through the staple points on the BYD N95 respirators.
- These small tears at the staple entry point are not always noticeable but could compromise the integrity of the respirator seal.
- Pulling/adjusting the headband straps through the staple points is not recommended in any of

the product information manuals and doing so is not in line with product specifications.

- Recommendations for Health Services:
 - Distribute this information to relevant staff.
 - Advise staff not to adjust the headband straps on the BYD N95 respirator.
 - Ensure all staff carry out a fit check every time they use a P2/N95 respirator.

Victoria's restriction levels

- Victoria's State of Emergency has been extended until 11.59pm on Sunday 13 September 2020.
- Victoria's State of Disaster is in place until Sunday 13 September 2020. This gives police and emergency services more powers to make sure people comply with public health directions.
- Melbourne moved to [Stage 4 restrictions](#) on Sunday 2 August 2020.
- Regional Victoria moved to [Stage 3 restrictions](#) on 5 August 2020.
- A curfew is in place for Melbourne from 8pm to 5am. The only reasons to leave home during these times are for work, medical care and caregiving.
- Employers must issue a permitted [worker permit](#) to each of their staff members that are required to attend a work site.
- All Victorians must now wear a face covering when leaving home. The DHHS website has more information on [face masks and coverings](#).

Key messages for the community

- All Victorians, including those in regional locations, are to stay home and get tested even with the mildest of symptoms. This includes fever, chills, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose and loss of sense of smell or taste. Go home straight after your test and self-isolate while you wait for the results. [Go to the DHHS testing map for locations](#).
- Victorians are reminded that no matter when we ease restrictions, wearing a mask, physically distancing and being on the lookout for symptoms must continue to be part of our "COVID Normal" for some time to come.
- Wear a face mask or covering when you leave home, unless a lawful exception applies.
- This is a difficult and uncertain time for all so support is vital and available. For more information on managing stress and support options, call the Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Services on 1800 512 348.
- Financial support is also available. The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Test Isolation Payment is being increased to \$450. You can find more information on [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Test Isolation and Worker Support Payments](#) on our website.
- Check our website for [information and advice about current restriction levels](#) in place, including the updated directions, stage 4 and stage 3 restrictions.
- The 'Partners in Wellbeing' hotline has extended their operating hours to 10pm on weekdays. Additional support for business owners is now available through access to business advisors and financial counsellors. The hotline number is 1300 375 330.

- A factsheet on how to '[Reduce your risk of coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)', has been [translated into 49 languages](#) and is on our website. A video from the Chief Health Officer showing our community 'how to safely wear a mask' has been [dubbed into a variety of languages](#) for the public.

Clinical information

[Latest coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for Victorian health services and general practice.](#)

[Latest information about providing immunisation services during Coronavirus Pandemic.](#)

Consumer information

[Financial support – for coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[Translated resources in over 50 languages](#)

[Victoria's current restrictions](#)

[Latest coronavirus information from the World Health Organization](#)

[Latest travel advice from Smartraveller](#)

Contacts

Medical practitioners needing clinical information or to notify 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.

