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).

17/12/2020

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded no new cases of coronavirus since yesterday.

- Victoria currently has 7 active internationally acquired cases in the state, all of which have been diagnosed in quarantine since Victoria commenced receiving international arrivals.

- All arrivals are tested if they show symptoms, as well as at Day 3 and Day 11 of their 14-day quarantine.

- This is the 48th consecutive day where Victoria has recorded no new community transmission cases.

- The total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reported in Victoria is now 20,351 including those in hotel quarantine.

- Today's 14-day average case number for metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria is zero.

- There were no new deaths and the state's death toll stands at 820.

- The total number of cases from an unknown source in the last 14 days is zero for metropolitan Melbourne and zero for regional Victoria. 3,762 cases may indicate community transmission (no change since yesterday's report).

- There are seven active cases in Victoria. 19,524 people have recovered.

- A total of 3,720,642 test results have been received. This is an increase of 9,477 since yesterday.

- You can find further details in today's [coronavirus (COVID-19) media release](#).

- The DHHS website has full details in the [interactive daily report](#).

- COVIDSafe Summer restrictions came into effect at 11:59pm on Sunday 6 December 2020. For more information visit the [COVIDSafe Summer restrictions summary](#).

- On 9 December, the [Public Health and Wellbeing Amendments (Quarantine Fees) Bill 2020](#) was passed. This amendment allows the government to charge a contribution fee for mandatory quarantine. Visit [mandatory quarantine contribution fee](#) for more information.

Two international travellers in mandatory quarantine

- Two international travellers in mandatory quarantine in Victoria returned a negative result for their second COVID-19 test on Tuesday (8 December 2020). An initial test was also negative. The travellers arrived in Sydney on Saturday and boarded a domestic flight to Melbourne without quarantining in NSW.

- All identified close contacts of the two travellers are able to end their current period of quarantine if they remain well.

- The Department has contacted the 179 people who were identified as close contacts from Virgin Airways flight VA838 from Sydney to Melbourne, which departed Sydney at noon on Saturday and arrived in Melbourne at around 1.45pm. This includes passengers, flight crew and Melbourne Airport staff identified as close contacts.

- The two international travellers are not showing symptoms of COVID-19 and have had no known contact with a positive case. They will remain in mandatory quarantine for 14 days and will be tested again on day 11 of their quarantine.

- Melbourne Airport is not a current risk to the public – you may continue to visit the airport, in line with current restrictions.

Face masks

- Under COVIDSafe Summer restrictions, there is a requirement to carry a mask at all times.

- From 11:59pm 6 December, masks are required in a limited number of places: on public transport, in rideshare vehicles and taxis, in some retail settings including indoor shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores and indoor markets.

- While masks are no longer mandated in most circumstances, they continue to be recommended indoors or outdoors when distancing can't be maintained.

Temporary border controls with South Australia

- From 11.59pm on Saturday 12 December 2020 travellers from South Australia will no longer require a permit to enter Victoria.

- While there are no longer restrictions on entry to the state, it is important that all visitors are

familiar and comply with Victoria's current health directions.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) fragments found in Daylesford, Hepburn, Hepburn Springs wastewater

- Traces of viral fragments of coronavirus have been detected in Castlemaine. The department is investigating further, and additional samples are being tested.

- Traces of viral fragments of coronavirus (COVID-19) were detected in a wastewater sample from the Daylesford, Hepburn and Hepburn Springs area on Monday 30 November.

- Further wastewater samples taken from 30 sites across Victoria (3 December 2020), including Daylesford, have all returned negative results.

- As always, anyone with symptoms in the Castlemaine, Daylesford, Hepburn and Hepburn Springs area – or anyone with symptoms who visited the region on the weekend – should get tested.

- Testing is available at Daylesford Health from 9:45am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

Current advice to clinicians

- Clinicians should be asking patients if they have been in South Australia and if so, to check the areas of risk defined by the South Australian Government and recommended actions.

- Statement on Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) diagnosis in symptomatic persons.

- Notifications to the department of a confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus (COVID-19) can be done 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 department continues to ask commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers to get tested for coronavirus (COVID-19). If commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers do not have any symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), they will not have to stay home to wait for their test results. Commercial passenger vehicle drivers and food delivery drivers will need to tell staff at the testing centre/site that they work in the industry.

COVID-19 testing criteria

- 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, or loss or changes in sense of smell or taste)

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

Asymptomatic testing is not recommended at this stage except for targeted programs

- ○ *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.

- If a symptomatic patient that presents for testing, **confirms exposure to a known coronavirus (COVID-19) case** within the past 14 days, and the outbreak definition is met, the test sample is to be treated as an 'outbreak sample'.

Victoria's restriction levels

- The State of Emergency has been extended until **3 January 2021** to allow the Chief Health Officer's directions to remain in force.

Key messages for the community

- High risk sites have been reported in the Northern Beaches area of Sydney. People who have attended some sites are required to self-quarantine for 14 days. Any person who has been in Sydney who has symptoms, however mild, should be tested and isolate until a result is available. Exposure sites are listed on the NSW Health website.

- Testing is a critical help to keep numbers down so it's extremely important that if people have symptoms, however mild, they get tested. Go home straight after your test and isolate while you wait for the results. Go to the testing map for locations.

- Public exposure sites are listed on the DHHS website. If you have visited any of the locations listed during the dates indicated, you should watch for coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms. If symptoms occur immediately get tested and stay at home while you wait for results.

- Six COVIDSafe principles apply across Victoria.

  - ○ Wear a face mask (indoors)

  - ○ Don't go to work if you feel unwell.

  - ○ Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres.

  - ○ Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.

  - ○ Perform good hand hygiene.

  - ○ Outdoor activities carry less risk than indoor activities.

- The Coronavirus (COVID-19) Home Safety Plan (PDF) is available for download which tells you what you need to know to help you, your family and friends stay safe and well.

- Many Victorians are feeling fatigued, isolated or lonely. If you are in need of support for your mental health there are mental health resources you can access on our website.

- If Victorians are not safe at home, they can seek help and support at an Orange Door or other family violence support service. If you or someone you know is at risk or experiencing family violence, call 000 in an emergency or safe steps 24/7 crisis service on 1800 015 188.

- The [Partners in Wellbeing](#) hotline (1300 375 330) is available for referrals from people who identify as LGBTIQ, multicultural, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, veterans and people experiencing homelessness.

Clinical information

- [Latest coronavirus (COVID-19) information for Victorian health services and general practice](#) .
- [Latest information about providing immunisation services during Coronavirus Pandemic](#) .

Online resources

- Locations of respiratory assessment clinics and testing sites are available [online and through an interactive map](#).
- Find out the latest information about visiting [care facilities](#) and [hospitals](#) on our website.
- [Protecting our healthcare workers (PDF)](#) sets out the very latest in our understanding of coronavirus (COVID-19) and how it can spread within healthcare settings – both hospitals and aged-care facilities. More information can be [found online](#).
- A new [Infection Prevention and Control](#) resource hub is now online, and includes a new factsheet on protective eyewear and the [Guide to the conventional use of PPE (Word)](#) Updated information for health care workers is available online on the [PPE coronavirus page](#).

Consumer information

- [Financial and other 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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