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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).

18/12/2020

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded one new case of coronavirus (COVID-19) since yesterday.
- Victoria currently has eight 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 49th consecutive day where Victoria has recorded no new community transmission cases.
- The total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reported in Victoria is now 20,352 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 3,728,212 test results have been received. This is an increase of 7,570 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.

New South Wales permit system

- Victorians are strongly advised not to travel to Sydney as conditions are expected to deteriorate and you may not be able to re-enter without undertaking hotel quarantine for 14 days.
- From midnight tonight, a permit system will be in place for all New South Wales residents traveling to Victoria, residents from other states travelling through NSW and Victorians visiting NSW and returning home.
- If you think you may have been exposed or have been to [these locations](#) then please contact the Department on 1800 675 398. We will ensure that anyone who has been exposed to this outbreak - regardless of whether you normally live in Victoria, NSW or elsewhere - is supported to safely and appropriately self-isolate and get tested. NSW Health are continually updating their high-risk exposure sites and we will advise the Victorian community accordingly.
- Victoria continues to work closely with NSW Health in response to an outbreak in NSW to ensure any people who have visited high-risk locations in the state immediately get tested and self-isolate.

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 Castlemaine and Corio wastewater

- Wastewater monitoring is continuing at more than 60 locations across Victoria.
- Low levels of viral fragments have been detected in samples taken this week at wastewater treatment plants in Castlemaine and Corio, and in sub-catchments of the Colac sewage system.
- It is likely people who have recovered from coronavirus (COVID-19) and are no longer infectious are continuing to shed the virus. We have seen similar patterns in multiple locations across the state and we expect this to continue. It is not a cause for concern.

As always, it remains vitally important that any Victorians with any coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, no matter how mild, stay home and get tested.

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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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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