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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).

26/1/2021

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded one new case of coronavirus (COVID-19) since yesterday, in hotel quarantine.
- This is the 20th consecutive day where Victoria has recorded no new locally acquired cases of coronavirus (COVID-19)
- The total number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases reported in Victoria is now 20,443 including those in hotel quarantine.
- There were no new deaths and the state's death toll stands at 820.
- The number of active cases in Victoria is 30, made up of one locally acquired case linked to the Black Rock restaurant cluster, and 30 cases in travellers in hotel quarantine.
- A total of 4,389,104 test results have been received. This is an increase of 11,656 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](#).

New Zealand travel bubble

- Anyone who arrived in Victoria from New Zealand between 14 January 2021 and 25 January 2021 should get tested within 72 hours of arrival (or as soon as possible if they arrived more

than three days ago), and isolate until they get a negative result.

- This precautionary approach is in response to the discovery of community exposure in New Zealand.
- The Australian Government has suspended the current 'travel bubble' arrangements between New Zealand and Australia for 72 hours, commencing 4.30 pm yesterday, Monday 25 January 2021.
- This means that travellers coming from New Zealand to Victoria in the 72 hours following this suspension will enter mandatory hotel quarantine for 14 days. If you plan to travel to Victoria from New Zealand over the coming days, you are strongly encouraged to reconsider.

New South Wales zone changes

- As of 6:00pm (Victorian AEDT) Friday 22 January 2021, The Greater Sydney Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Blacktown City, Burwood, Canada Bay City, Canterbury-Bankstown, Fairfield City, Inner West, Liverpool City, Parramatta City and Strathfield Municipality will join the rest of Greater Sydney, Wollongong and Blue Mountains as orange zones.
- Cumberland LGA will remain a red zone. People from Cumberland are still not permitted to travel to Victoria without an exemption, exception or essential worker permit. Those who have already applied for an exemption application will not need to reapply.
- The updated orange zone listing overrides the previous classification as a red zone and applies to the last 14 days. Anyone who is now in an orange zone and meets the permit criteria can now apply for an Orange Zone Permit from 6:00pm on Friday 22 January 2021.
- Travel from an orange zone requires people to self-isolate, get tested within 72 hours of arrival and remain in quarantine until they receive a negative result. Travel from a green zone requires people to watch and get tested if they have any symptoms at all.
- Travellers must also confirm they have not been in the remaining red zone of Cumberland within the past 14 days (other than for transit), have not been in close contact with a coronavirus (COVID-19) case and do not have any symptoms.
- Exemption applications will no longer be required for those LGAs being downgraded to an orange zone – unless people have also been in a red zone in the last 14 days – and will not be considered. People can apply for an Orange Zone Permit via the [Service Victoria website](#).
- All exemptions are reviewed by the Chief Health Officer, or their delegate, and take up to 48 hours to process.
- You can apply for an exemption by calling the Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 675 398 or via [the online form](#).

Queensland zone changes

- The Victorian Chief Health Officer has now declared all areas of Queensland to be green zones.
- From 6:00pm on Friday 22 January 2021 a person who has been in Queensland for the last 14 days can apply for a Green Zone Permit. You cannot enter Victoria without a Green Zone Permit unless an exemption, exception, Specified Worker Permit or Freight Worker Permit applies.

Victoria's Permit System

- Victoria's new 'traffic light' permit system has come into effect, for all domestic travel into

Victoria.

- All residents and travellers wishing to enter Victoria must now apply for a permit and the 'traffic light' permit system applies to travellers from anywhere across Australia.
- Applications can be made through the [Service Victoria portal](#).
- Areas across Australia are to be designated as green, orange or red, according to their risk, and will be updated based on the latest health advice. To help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), all residents and travellers wishing to enter Victoria must now apply for a permit. The 'traffic light' permit system applies to travellers from anywhere across Australia.

Testing sites

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing remains one of the best ways we can keep people safe and stay open, so we're asking anyone with symptoms to come and get tested - regardless of the time of year.
- Testing sites are also be operating in the popular summer destinations at Torquay, Lorne, and the Mornington Peninsula.
- Testing site details, including new and pop-up testing site and opening hours, are available at [Where to get tested page](#).

Face masks

- From 11:59pm on Sunday 17 January 2021, face masks will no longer be required in offices.
- Masks remain mandatory on all Victorian domestic flights, at airports, in hospitals, on public transport, in taxis or ride share vehicles, in large retail stores (over 2000 sqm), such as department stores, electronics stores, furniture stores or hardware stores or supermarkets, and inside shopping centres, including the retail stores inside shopping centres, such as clothing stores.
- You must always carry a face mask with you when you leave home, unless you have a lawful reason not to.
- Wearing a face mask is strongly recommended whenever you can't keep 1.5 metres distance from others.

Wastewater monitoring continues in more than 60 locations

- Victoria has joined other Australian states and territories and New Zealand in collaborative research that will help us detect coronavirus (COVID-19) viral fragments in wastewater systems and use testing results with other health data as part of our response.
- 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 are from or if they have been in New South Wales

or Queensland and if so, to check the areas of risk defined by the NSW and QLD governments 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.

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 29 January 2021 to allow the Chief Health Officer's directions to remain in force.
- From 11:59pm 22 January 2021 (Victorian AEDT) the number of visitors to your home can be increased from 15 to 30.

Key messages for the community

- 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.

- COVIDSafe principles apply across Victoria:
 - You must carry a face mask with you when you leave home. You must wear your face mask on public transport, while in taxis or ride share vehicles, or when going to large retail venues, including shopping centres, supermarkets and department stores.
 - Wearing a face mask is strongly recommended in all other situations when you can't keep 1.5 metres distance from other people. Don't go to work if you feel unwell.
 - Maintain a physical distance of 1.5 metres.
 - Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow.
 - Wash hands with soap or use hand sanitiser regularly.
- 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](#) (Word)

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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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.

