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).

23/2/2021

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded no new cases of COVID-19. This is the fourth day in a row that Victoria has recorded no new cases of COVID-19.

- The total number of COVID-19 cases reported in Victoria is now 20,479.

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

- The number of active cases in Victoria is 25. This includes 19 locally acquired cases and 6 overseas acquired cases.

- A total of 4,887,628 test results have been received. This is an increase of 17,270 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.

Update: circuit-breaker action lifted

- From 11:59pm on Wednesday 17 February, Victoria went back to COVIDSafe Summer, with some additional rules.

- There are no restrictions on reasons to leave home, but stay COVIDSafe.

- Face masks are required everywhere indoors except in your own home. Face masks are also required outside if you cannot physically distance from others.
- Restaurants and retail can reopen – density limits are outlined in the [COVIDSafe Summer table of restrictions](#).
- Offices – both public and private sectors – can return to 50 per cent of workers on-site.
- Community facilities, entertainment venues and all other public places can reopen with some additional limits on crowd sizes:

  - seated indoor entertainment venues are capped at 50 per cent capacity, up to a maximum of 300 people
  - indoor non-seated venues, such as galleries, are capped at 50 per cent capacity up to a maximum of 300 people
  - cinemas are capped at 50 per cent of seated capacity up to a maximum of 300 people.
  - no more than five visitors are allowed to your home each day, and outdoor public gatherings with friends and family are limited to 20 people.

- Visits to hospitals and residential aged care facilities are limited to one household each day, with some exceptions.
- The four reasons to leave home and five-kilometre restriction will no longer apply.
- Weddings, funerals and religious gatherings can resume with density limits.
- Schools resume onsite learning.

Update: Holiday Inn cases

- There are no new cases of COVID-19 linked to the Holiday Inn.
- We are continuing to manage, monitor and test the primary close contacts linked to the Holiday Inn cases.

COVID-19 vaccination program

- COVID-19 vaccinations have begun at hospital vaccination hubs across Victoria.
- Victorians with the highest risk of exposure to COVID-19 are being prioritised for the vaccine, including Hotel Quarantine and Health Hotel workers, airport and port workers, and frontline health staff in COVID-19 screening clinics, specialist COVID-19 wards, Intensive Care Units, Emergency Departments, and more.
- The vaccines are being administered through hospital vaccination hubs managed by public health services. Hubs also manage several special outreach sites including at Melbourne Airport and the Port of Portland.
- Hubs will also deliver the vaccine to public sector residential aged care patients and workers, with the Commonwealth responsible for providing the vaccine to the private sector aged care and disability sectors.
- All nine hospital vaccination hubs will commence operations over the coming weeks.
- The Victorian Government is working closely with the Commonwealth on the rollout of its vaccination program.

- Initially, it will be a steady and staged rollout, reflecting both the number of doses available and sensitivity of high-risk workplace settings.

- Looking forward, we are working to deliver 40,000 to 50,000 vaccines over the next four weeks.

Wastewater catchment

- Residents of and recent visitors to Carrum Downs, Langwarrin and Skye with even the mildest of COVID-19 symptoms are urged to get tested after viral fragments were again detected in the local wastewater catchment.

- Detections of viral fragments found in two wastewater samples collected between 15 February and 17 February have been confirmed by further laboratory testing.

- Viral fragments were also detected this week in wastewater samples taken in the Wantirna South and Boronia area, and in the St Kilda East and Caulfield North area.

- Anyone who has any symptoms of COVID-19 is urged to get tested, especially if you live in or have visited:

  - Carrum Downs or Langwarrin from 13 to 17 February (includes parts of Skye)

  - Wantirna South or Boronia from 13 to 15 February (includes parts of Bayswater, Ferntree Gully, Knoxfield and Tremont)

  - St Kilda East or Caufield North from 13 to 16 February (includes parts of Balaclava, Caulfield and Elsternwick)

- Wastewater monitoring is now undertaken at 132 locations across Victoria including 71 wastewater treatment plants and 61 sites within Melbourne metropolitan sewage networks.

- Fragments of the virus detected in wastewater may be due to a person with COVID-19 being in the early active infectious phase or it could be because someone is continuing to shed the virus after the early infectious period.

- Further information can be found at Wastewater monitoring.

Testing sites and expanded testing

- Demand for testing is stable across the system, with no waiting times longer than 30 minutes.

- The department is publishing expected wait times at testing sites as well as updated information about locations and hours of operation at Where to get tested.

Interstate border restrictions

- All travel into Victoria from other states and territories requires a travel permit.You can apply for a permit via the ServiceVictoria website.

- Travellers from the Greater Melbourne area are prohibited from entering South Australia. Essential travellers or travellers with an exemption (such as returning SA residents, genuine relocations, and those fleeing family violence) are required to self-quarantine at a suitable place for 14 days upon arrival and submit to COVID-19 testing on day 1, 5 and 12.

- Travellers who have been anywhere in Victoria in the last 14 days will need to apply for a border pass before entering Queensland. Travellers who have been in the Greater Melbourne area on or since 7 February will have to complete a border pass, enter Queensland by air and quarantine in government-arranged accommodation for 14 days.

- Victoria is classified as low risk by Tasmania, however travellers who have spent time in a high-risk area or premises in the 14 days before arriving in Tasmania are not permitted to enter.

- Travellers from Victoria entering the Northern Territory from Greater Melbourne (including Melbourne Airport) must complete 14 days of mandatory supervised quarantine.

- Travellers from Victoria entering Western Australia must apply for a G2G Pass and quarantine for 14 days on arrival and obtain a COVID-19 test within 48 hours of arrival.

Current advice to clinicians

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

- 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 Friday **26 February 2021** to allow the Chief Health Officer's directions to remain in force.

Clinical information

- Latest coronavirus (COVID-19) information for Victorian health services and general practice
- Latest information about providing immunisation services during Coronavirus Pandemic (Word)
- Andrew Wilson, Chief Medical Officer Safer Care Victoria, speaks about the importance of staff completing declarations to consider their health before they start work

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.

Mental health resources

- 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.

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

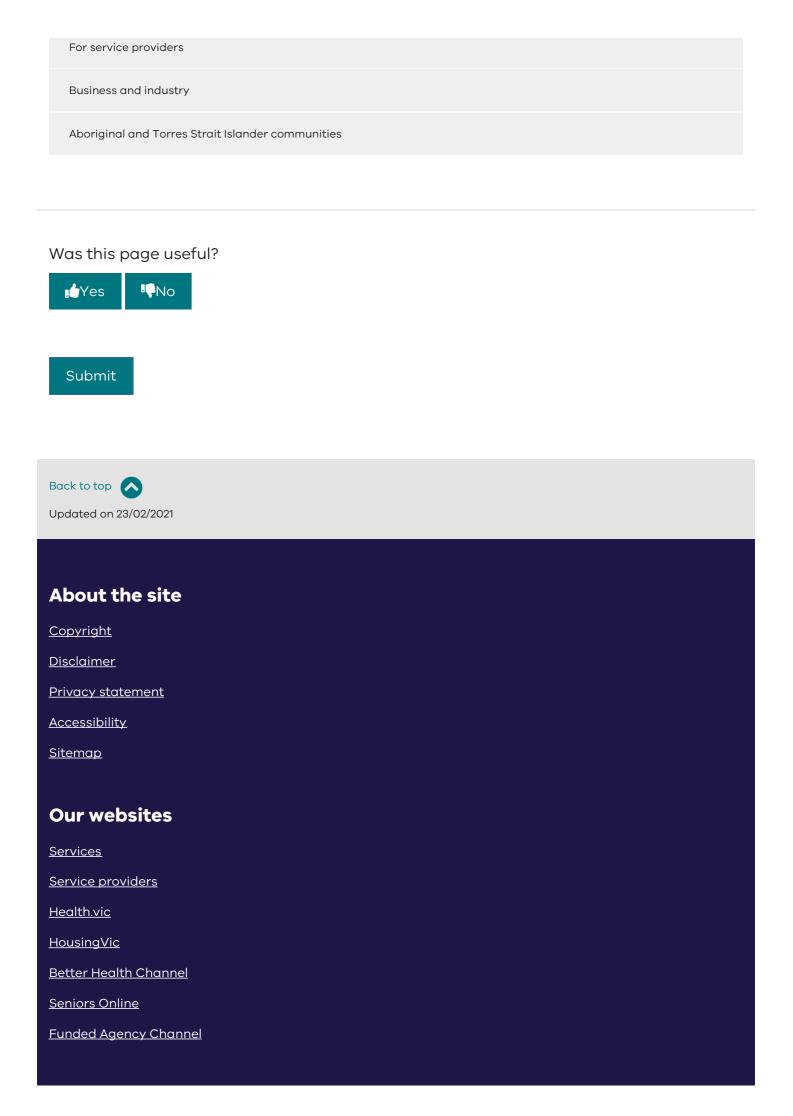- [Latest travel advice from Smartraveller](#)

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 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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