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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).

26/2/2021

What's new?

- Victoria has recorded two 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 17. This includes 12 locally acquired cases and 5 overseas acquired cases.
- A total of 4,942,705 test results have been received. This is an increase of 16,594 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](#).

Easing of restrictions

- From 11:59pm tonight, Victoria will return to the previous COVIDSafe settings that were in place prior to the Black Rock outbreak.
- Victorians will be able to host up to 30 people in their home per day and outdoor gatherings can increase to 100.

- Meanwhile, public and private sector office workers can return to work at up to 75 per cent a day.
- Masks will be only be required on public transport, in rideshare vehicles and taxis, in sensitive settings such as aged care facilities – and in some larger retail settings including indoor shopping centres, supermarkets, department stores and indoor markets.
- Density limits remain for pubs, restaurants and cafes, beauty services, retail business, gyms, funerals and wedding and nightclubs and community facilities, such as libraries, RSLs and community halls.
- For more information on the new coronavirus settings visit [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Victoria](#).

Holiday Inn outbreak

- There are two new cases of COVID-19 linked to the Holiday Inn.
- The new cases include two household members of cases that attended the private function on Sydney Road, Coburg.
- Both were in quarantine while infectious and there are no further public exposure sites. Both were identified on a Day 11 test.
- We are continuing to manage, monitor and test the primary close contacts linked to the Holiday Inn cases.

COVID-19 vaccination program

- A total of 839 COVID-19 vaccination doses were administered yesterday at hospital vaccination hubs across Victoria.
- This brings the total number of vaccine doses administered in Victoria since the program started on Monday 22 February to 2,902.
- 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

- 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](#).

New Zealand Travel Bubble

- From 11.59pm Wednesday 24 February all flights arriving from Auckland into Victoria will be regarded as 'red zone' arrivals and anyone arriving will be required to enter mandatory hotel quarantine for 14 days.
- Those who arrived in Melbourne from Auckland yesterday, Tuesday 23 February, are asked to get a COVID-19 test immediately and quarantine until they receive a negative test result.

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.
- From 12:01am 26 February 2021 travel from Victoria into South Australia is allowed. Travellers who arrived earlier than this date and are in quarantine should check their requirements on the [SA Health website](#).
- From 12:00am 27 February 2021, travellers can enter Queensland, with no restrictions.
- 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, quarantine for 14 days on arrival and obtain a COVID-19 test on day 11 if still within Western Australia.

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 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 11:59 pm, 15 March 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 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.



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