

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU



All information below is directly from the Department of Health & Human Services website.

If you have reason to believe you may have come in contact with the COVID-19 virus and feel unwell, please call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 for advice.

For more information on COVID-19 and how to prevent its spread, visit dhhs.tas.gov.au/news/2020/coronavirus_update

For latest information relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Australia, visit health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

For information on the COVIDSafe App, visit <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app>

[Protect yourself, protect others\(PDF, 207KB\)](#) (Tas Dept of Health)

[World Health Organization guide to effective hand washing\(PDF, 457KB\)](#)

Restrictions

Check the Coronavirus Website for current restrictions.

What we know about COVID-19

The current COVID-19 situation is changing rapidly. We are still learning about how this new virus spreads and the disease it causes. We know:

- the virus causes respiratory disease that can spread from person to person
- most people experience mild flu-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat and fatigue
- some people experience severe illness and, sadly, a small proportion die
- older people and people with underlying medical conditions seem to be more at risk of severe illness
- there is no treatment for COVID-19, but medical care can treat most of the symptoms. Antibiotics do not work on viruses
- vaccine is currently not available.
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PROTECTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS FROM CORONAVIRUS

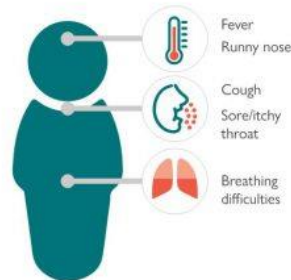
COVID-19 testing for all Tasmanian residents



Do you have any cold or flu-like symptoms?

This includes fever, runny nose, cough,
sore/itchy throat or shortness of breath.

Call your GP or the Public
Health Hotline 1800 671 738
to request a COVID-19 test



You must have a referral to be tested.

If there is no testing clinic in your local area, you
can travel outside your municipality to have a test.

After being tested, you must self-isolate at home
until you receive your results.

For more information visit
www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au



How does it spread?

The virus most likely spreads through:

- close contact with an infectious person
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze (if you are within a metre or very large step of an infected person)
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs, sink taps and tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people recover easily, others may get very sick very quickly. Symptoms include fever, flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue, and shortness of breath. People with severe illness may have difficulty breathing, which is a sign of pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms to show after a person has been infected.

Who is most at risk?

Almost everyone in Australia with COVID-19 has had recent international travel or contact with a person known to have the virus.

At the moment it seems the elderly, people with weakened immune systems, and people with underlying health conditions, like diabetes, lung disease, heart disease or kidney failure, may be at higher risk of severe illness.

How can I help prevent the spread of disease?

Personal hygiene is an important protection against COVID-19 and all respiratory illnesses. You can help slow the spread of illness by:

- washing your hands often with soap and warm, running water (or alcohol-base hand rub), especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- using a tissue (or flexed elbow if a tissue is not readily available) to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, then putting the tissue in the rubbish
- staying at home if you are sick, unless you are told to see a doctor
- keeping a large step from others if you can, when you are out in public
- wearing a facemask if you are unwell, to protect others
- knowing the signs of illness.

When should I wash my hands?

- before touching your face, especially your mouth, lips, nose, eyes
- before eating, drinking, preparing food/drinks
- after going to the toilet
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing nose.

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

If you think you might have COVID-19 because of recent travel or contact with a confirmed case, phone the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

If you are feeling unwell, but haven't travelled or had contact with a confirmed case, phone your doctor or healthdirect Australia (1800 022 222) for advice. Protect others around you by washing your hands and keeping your distance. If seeing your GP, you **MUST** call ahead and mention your symptoms and any travel details.

If you have serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance and tell the operator your recent travel history.

I'm sick but haven't travelled or had contact with a confirmed case.

While COVID-19 is causing a lot of concern, it is important to remember that most people in Australia who are unwell are suffering from the usual viruses in our community. At the moment, almost all cases in Australia have had recent international travel or had contact with a person known to have COVID-19. So, it is very unlikely that you have COVID-19.

See your GP if you feel you need to, or call healthdirect on 1800 022 222. If you suddenly get a lot worse and are worried, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.

What is the difference between a close and casual contact?

Generally, a close contact is someone who:

- spends at least 15 minutes in face-to-face contact with someone who's had a positive test result; OR
 - spends more than 2 hours in an enclosed room with someone who's had a positive test result
- A casual contact is someone who has been in the same general area as someone who has tested positive to the virus while they were infectious, but is at lower risk of being infected.

Who are casual contacts?

A **casual contact** is someone who has been in the same general area as someone who has tested positive to the virus while that person was infectious.

You are a casual contact if:

- you have had less than 15 minutes face-to-face contact in any setting with a confirmed case in the 24 hours before the onset of their symptoms or while symptomatic; or
- you have shared a close space with a confirmed case for less than two hours in the 24 hours before the onset of their symptoms or while symptomatic.

What do casual contacts need to do?

As a casual contact, you do **not** need to stay home from work or school while you are well, unless you work with people who are vulnerable to severe illness from this virus.

You do not need to wear a facemask if you are well. Handwashing is more important for slowing the spread of illness.

You must closely monitor yourself for symptoms for 14 days (from when you had casual contact). Symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

If you start feeling unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, within 14 days of your last contact with a confirmed case,

- **isolate yourself (stay more than 1.5 metres or two large steps away from other people)**
- **call the Tasmanian Public Health Hotline (1800 671 738) and tell them you have had casual contact with someone known to have coronavirus.**

If you have severe symptoms, like difficulty breathing, call Triple Zero (000) and ask for an ambulance. Tell the ambulance officers that you have had casual contact with someone known to have coronavirus.

Who needs to self-isolate?

To help limit the spread of COVID-19, people need to self-isolate at home or in their accommodation if they:

1. Have returned from overseas on or after 16 March
2. Have been in or transited through China or Iran in the past 14 days
3. Have returned from South Korea on or after 5 March
4. Have returned from Italy on or after 11 March
5. Been in 'close contact' with a confirmed case
6. Develop fever OR acute respiratory infection (eg shortness of breath, cough, sore throat) within 14 days of returning from anywhere overseas.

Those who return from overseas on or after 16 March (1 above) need to self-isolate at home or in their accommodation for 14 days. If they remain well, they can then leave self-isolation and return to normal activities.

Those who have travelled or been in contact with a confirmed case (2–5 above) need to self-isolate for 14 days from leaving mainland China, South Korea, Italy or Iran or having close contact with a confirmed case. If they remain well, they can then leave self-isolation and return to work /school and normal duties.

Those who are sick (6 above) should self-isolate and call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

I have arrived into Tasmania from overseas, what do I need to know?

In line with the Australian Government announcement, all international arrivals into Australia from midnight Sunday 15 March 2020, are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

This includes people having travelled internationally en route to Tasmania.

Being isolated means that people need to stay at their location. A person in isolation cannot leave to attend public places, including: work; supermarkets; schools; childcare or university.

For more information please view [Flyer for international travellers arriving in Tasmania](#) [PDF]

Why do you have to isolate yourself for a whole 14 days?

If you have been told to isolate, it is because you might become unwell with COVID-19. It can take up to 14 days for people who have been infected with the virus to become sick, and it's possible to spread the virus to others 24 hours before you feel sick. Isolating yourself is very important to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Tasmania. If you have been told to isolate at home, you must do so.

You should monitor your health during this time, and call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738 if you begin to feel unwell.

What does 'isolate yourself' mean?

If you have been told you need to isolate, you must stay at home or in your accommodation and not attend public places, including work, school, supermarkets, childcare or public areas of university, higher education and vocational education campuses. Only people you usually live with should stay in the home or accommodation. Do not see visitors. Where possible, get others such as friends or family, who are not required to be isolated, to get food or other necessities.

If you must leave the home or residence, such as to seek medical care, you should wear a surgical mask if you have one. For more information, see the '[Home isolation and care resources](#)' on the Australian Government Department of Health website.

You must remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

I'm in home isolation and need to get some groceries/go to the chemist

It is very important that you don't leave your home while you're in home isolation. If possible, ask a neighbour, family member or friend to help you, or do an online order from your supermarket, with home delivery.

What should I do if I become unwell after leaving isolation or quarantine?

People who have been required to be in home isolation or quarantined and have completed their 14 day period without showing signs or symptoms of being unwell, are permitted to return to their daily activities including going to work, school, university, attending public places and using public transport.

While COVID-19 is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat and tiredness are much more likely to be suffering from a cold or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19.

However, as a precaution, if you do develop these symptoms soon after leaving isolation, you are encouraged to see your usual doctor. Your doctor will be able to advise you on what steps you should take to get better and may test you for a number of respiratory infections including COVID-19, if medically necessary.

I live with someone who's in home isolation. Do I need to self-isolate too?

You don't need to stay in home isolation unless the person in home isolation who you live with gets sick and becomes a confirmed case. Then you will need to self-isolate for 14 days. If you don't get sick in that time, you'll be free to leave home isolation.

I live with someone who's in home isolation and I'm at risk of severe illness (underlying health condition like heart disease / cancer, or elderly)

How can I protect myself?

People can spread the virus to others up to 24 hours before they show signs of being sick, so it's important to protect yourself.

If you have an option of living elsewhere while the person is in home-isolation, that would be wise.

Otherwise:

- Try to keep your distance from the person in home isolation. Stay in separate rooms if you can and use separate bathrooms.
- If you need to share a bathroom, keep toothbrushes and face washers / towels separate.
- Don't share drinks or food.
- Wash your hands after touching crockery or cutlery used by the person in home isolation.
- Wash your hands often, especially before touching your face and preparing food/drinks or eating.

Where can I be tested for COVID-19?

Testing for novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is only available at a few places in Tasmania. Your doctor or the Public Health Hotline (1800 671 738) will tell you where you need to go. You'll need to book an appointment to have the test done.

The Department of Health fact sheet [I'm being tested. What do I need to know?](#) has more information about the process for testing for COVID-19.

I'm waiting for test results, when will I get them?

The Public Health Hotline response team or your GP will call you when your results are available. It usually takes 1-2 days.

I've had a negative test result but I'm getting worse

See your GP or call healthDirect on 1800 022 222. If you are severely unwell, call Triple Zero (000) for an ambulance.