Coronavirus: What you need to know

This is important information for you about coronavirus (COVID-19).

There are other helpful fact sheets on our website:

- Coronavirus: What is it?
- Coronavirus: 5 things to do right now
- Coronavirus: FAQs
- Coronavirus: Social distancing
- Coronavirus: Staying at home.

Information and support are available. You are not alone.

Contact the Disability Information Helpline on 1800 643 787 or visit www.dss.gov.au/disabilityhelp

This fact sheet was updated on 14 April 2020.
How to use this document

The Australian Government wrote this document. When you see the word ‘we’, it means the Australian Government.

We have written this document in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

You can ask for help to read this document.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.
What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus that has affected many people around the world.

A virus is an illness or disease that can spread easily from one person to another person.

Coronavirus is spreading quickly.

Coronavirus has been called a pandemic.

A pandemic happens when a virus spreads quickly to lots of countries around the world.
What are the symptoms?

A symptom is a sign that you might be sick.

You might:

- see symptoms
- feel symptoms.

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- fever
- sore throat
- cough
- tiredness
- shortness of breath.
People who have coronavirus can have:

- none of these symptoms and feel ok
- some of these symptoms and feel a little sick
- all of these symptoms and feel very sick.

If you have trouble breathing, call an ambulance straight away on 000.

These symptoms are very similar to:

- other colds
- the flu.

So you may not have the coronavirus.
What can you do if you have these symptoms?

If you’re feeling sick, you should stay:

- at home
- at a hospital or health care facility.

Call your doctor. Do not go to the doctor – call first.

They will tell you if you need to be tested.

You might need to be tested if you:

- just came back from overseas
- have been close to someone who has coronavirus.

We don’t have a cure for coronavirus yet.

But you can get help to manage your symptoms.
How does coronavirus spread?

Coronavirus spreads from 1 person to another.

You can catch coronavirus if you:

- have been close to someone who has coronavirus, but doesn’t have symptoms yet
- have been close to someone who has coronavirus and has symptoms
- touch an object, like a table or a door handle that has coronavirus on it, and then touch your face.
How can you stop the spread?

To help stop the spread of coronavirus, you must:

- wash your hands with soap and water many times during the day, especially:
  - after you cough or sneeze
  - before and after you eat
  - after you use the toilet.

- try not to touch your face

- sneeze or cough into a tissue or your bent elbow

- call the doctor if you don’t feel well

- wear a face mask if you feel sick – you don’t need to wear a face mask if you are healthy

- keep space between you and other people. This is called social distancing.
What is social distancing?

Social distancing means you keep space between you and other people.

This is the most important thing you can do to stop coronavirus from spreading.

Stay 1.5 metres from other people.

You might also need to self-isolate.

If you self-isolate, it means you don’t:

- leave your home
- see other people.
You might have to self-isolate because you:

- are sick
- have just come back from overseas
- have been close to someone who has coronavirus.

If you have to self-isolate, you:

- are not allowed visitors – you can only see people that you live with
- need someone to bring you food and other necessary items and leave it at your front door
- should wear a mask if you need to leave your home for medical care.

We’ve made some Easy Read fact sheets about:

- social distancing
- self-isolating.

You can find them on our website.
Who needs to stay at home?

You might need to self-isolate if you:

- have just come back from overseas

- have been close to someone who has coronavirus.

The Australian Government is also asking people not to travel.

You can’t go overseas at the moment.

You can’t travel to some other states of Australia at the moment either.
Who has more risk of getting coronavirus?

Everyone is at risk of getting coronavirus. Some people are more at risk of getting really sick, such as:

- people who already have an illness, like cancer or diabetes
- older people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- people living in group homes
- people living in detention facilities.

At this time, we’re not sure how dangerous coronavirus is for children and young babies.

You should still take care to protect children and babies from catching coronavirus.
For more information, contact the Disability Information Helpline on 1800 643 787 or visit www.dss.gov.au/disabilityhelp

You can call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. It’s open 24 hours a day.

If you need information in a language other than English, call 131 450.

If you’re worried about your health, call your doctor. Do not go to the doctor – call first.

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