



## Visitor Information and Social Distancing Requirements

### What is novel coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious acute respiratory diseases. The virus first seen in Hubei Province, China is called 'novel' because it is new. COVID-19 has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and there has been a significant increase in cases across the world including the USA, Europe and UK. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and it can spread from person-to-person.

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other colds and flus and include:

- fever
- sore throat
- cough
- tiredness
- difficulty breathing
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea

While COVID-19 is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying these symptoms are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness, and not COVID-19.

### How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- close contact with a person while they are infectious, including in the 48 hours before their symptoms appeared
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth, eyes or face

### What does social distancing mean?

Social distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people. When you visit the hospital, any areas you attend will require you to maintain personal distancing requirements set out by the Department of Health.

Maintaining at least 1.5metre distance between other people, and four-square metre rule per person in a room is important. Direct personal contact between yourself and other people, including the patient you are visiting, should be minimised where possible. This is especially important if you are in areas where there are a number of other people such as waiting rooms.



## What do I do if I develop symptoms?

You must **not** visit the hospital if you believe you are sick or think you have symptoms of COVID-19. You should seek medical advice, contact your doctor or call the National Coronavirus Helpline for advice on 1800 020 080.

## How you can help minimise the risk of COVID-19

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and keeping your distance from others when you are sick is the best defence against most viruses, including COVID-19.

At all times, you should:

1. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.
2. Cover your cough and sneeze into your elbow, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
3. Avoid direct contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people) including touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact.
4. Do not share cigarettes or vapes.
5. When eating, always maintain safe distances, do not share food or water bottles. Use cutlery, and do not use your hands for eating without performing hand hygiene first.
6. Exercise personal responsibility for safe distancing measures.

## What does “Isolation” mean in hospital?

If a doctor suspects a patient has symptoms related to COVID-19 they will be asked to undergo a test. The patient will have to remain in their room while in hospital and will not be permitted to have visitors. In hospital, this is called isolation. Staff who are looking after the patient during this time will be wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes mask, gown, eye protection and gloves for providing of all care to them.

## Who is most at risk?

In Australia, the people most at risk of getting the virus are:

- travellers who have recently been overseas
- those who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- people in correctional and detention facilities
- people in group residential settings

People who are, or are more likely to be, at higher risk of serious illness if they get the virus are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
- People 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
- People 70 years and older
- People with compromised immune systems

At this stage the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children, relative to the broader population. There is limited evidence currently regarding the risk in pregnant women.

### How is the virus treated?

There is no specific treatment for coronaviruses. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care.

### Can I visit a patient in hospital?

Due to the risk of COVID-19, the hospital has restricted visitors to a nominated support person or carer at this time, and you should check with the hospital as to how many visitors are allowed.

You should stay in touch by phone and on-line with your family and friends who are in hospital.

### How long can I stay at the hospital?

You will need to check with the hospital the duration of visiting hours, as this is restricted in most hospitals. If you are transporting a family member to hospital for a procedure, you may be asked to leave the hospital and wait elsewhere until your family member's procedure is complete. The hospital will contact you when you can return to visit your family member.

### Should I wear a face mask?

You do not need to wear a mask if you are healthy.

Face masks more generally are not recommended. A face mask will not protect you against becoming infected. While the use of face masks can help to prevent transmission of disease from infected patients to others, face masks are not currently recommended for use by healthy members of the public for the prevention of respiratory illness.

### If you would like more information

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

# COVID-19: IDENTIFYING THE SYMPTOMS

Coronavirus  
(COVID-19)

SYMPTOMS		COVID-19	COLD	FLU
		Symptoms range from mild to severe	Gradual onset of symptoms	Abrupt onset of symptoms
<b>Fever</b>		Common	Rare	Common
<b>Cough</b>		Common	Common	Common
<b>Sore Throat</b>		Sometimes	Common	Common
<b>Shortness of Breath</b>		Sometimes	No	No
<b>Fatigue</b>		Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
<b>Aches &amp; Pains</b>		Sometimes	No	Common
<b>Headaches</b>		Sometimes	Common	Common
<b>Runny or Stuffy Nose</b>		Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
<b>Diarrhea</b>		Rare	No	Sometimes, especially for children
<b>Sneezing</b>		No	Common	No

Adapted from material produced by WHO, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



**TOGETHER WE CAN HELP STOP THE SPREAD AND STAY HEALTHY.**

For more information about **Coronavirus (COVID-19)** visit [health.gov.au](http://health.gov.au)



Australian Government

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