

# COVID-19 (NOVEL CORONAVIRUS) FIND THE FACTS



## What is the COVID-19 virus?

COVID-19 is a newly discovered virus that can cause lung infection. The situation is evolving rapidly with cases of COVID-19 reported in a number of countries including Australia.

## Can I catch it?

Most people catch COVID-19 from close contact with someone who has it. Contaminated droplets are spread by coughing or sneezing. Contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects can also spread the virus.

## How long does COVID-19 last on surfaces?

Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with a common household disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others. Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

## How can I reduce my risk?

The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is the same way you would protect yourself from catching flu or other respiratory illness:

- wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol.

- cover your sneeze or cough with your flexed elbow or a tissue.
- avoid close contact with people with cold or flu-like symptoms.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- stay home if you are sick.

Face masks are not recommended for the general population.

## How is it diagnosed?

Infection with COVID-19 is usually diagnosed by testing swabs from the throat or fluid from the lungs. COVID-19/Flu clinics are being established within all Local Health Districts across NSW to assess and diagnose patients with possible COVID-19 infections and other respiratory illness such as influenza as we approach the winter season.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose sore throat or shortness of breath.

## I have symptoms. What should I do?

If you develop a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath within 14 days of travel to a country at risk of COVID-19, seek immediate medical attention. Call:

- your doctor or
- your local Emergency Department or
- healthdirect on 1800 022 222

When seeking medical care wear a surgical mask (if available) otherwise ask for one immediately when you arrive.

## Do I need to isolate myself if I have returned from a country at risk of COVID-19?

If you have travelled to or transited through a country of high-risk of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you must isolate yourself from others for 14 days from the day you left. You should watch out for symptoms.

If you have travelled to or transited through a country of moderate-risk of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you should self-monitor for symptoms, practice social distancing when outside the workplace, and immediately isolate yourself for 14 days if you become unwell.

When seeking medical care wear a surgical mask (if available) otherwise ask for one immediately when you arrive.

Information on countries at risk of COVID-19 can be found at: [www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert](http://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert)

## What if I come into contact with a person with COVID-19?

Public Health Units are identifying and contacting people who have been in close contact with confirmed cases of COVID-19, in accordance with National Guidelines.

Those people will be monitored and managed to prevent any further spread of the infection, should they be found to also have COVID-19 infection.

Information for people who have been exposed can be found at: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/novel-coronavirus-close-contact.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/novel-coronavirus-close-contact.aspx) and [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/novel-coronavirus-casual-contact.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/novel-coronavirus-casual-contact.aspx)

## Where can I find more information?

- National Coronavirus Health Information Line: **1800 020 080**
- Healthdirect helpline: **1800 022 222**
- Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National): **131 450** or [www.tisnational.gov.au](http://www.tisnational.gov.au)
- NSW Health website: [www.health.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/coronavirus) and [www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx)
- Australian Government Department of Health website: [www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert](http://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert)
- Smart Traveller: [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au)