Coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert

We are monitoring the respiratory illness outbreak caused by coronavirus (COVID-19). We update this alert every day with the latest medical advice and official reports.

Alert status
Active

Last updated
11 March 2020

On this page

Current status

In the news

The Australian Government has unveiled a comprehensive $2.4 billion health package to protect all Australians, including vulnerable groups such as the elderly, those with chronic conditions and Indigenous communities, from the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Australian Government has secured additional surgical, P2 and N95 masks for the National Medical Stockpile, for medical and aged care professionals to care for patients with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

The Prime Minister has announced the activation of the National Coordination Mechanism. The mechanism will coordinate activities across the Commonwealth, state and territory governments as well as industry to ensure a consistent national approach is taken to provide essential services across a range of critical sectors and supply chains.

The Australian Government has committed to a 50-50 shared health funding deal with the states and territories to ensure a rapid health response to the evolving COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak.

The Prime Minister has announced the activation of the Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Read the latest travel restrictions.

For more information, read the latest transcripts and media releases from our Chief Medical Officer and our Deputy Chief Medical Officer about coronavirus (COVID-19) in our news

section.

You can also see updates in media releases and transcripts fromMinister Hunt relating to coronavirus on the Health Ministers' site.

In Australia

> As at 11:00 hrs on 11 March 2020, we have 112 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), including 3 deaths, in Australia.

- 60 in New South Wales
- 15 in Queensland
- 6 in South Australia
- 2 in Tasmania
- 15 in Victoria*
- 4 in Western Australia
- 10 associated with the Diamond Princess cruise ship

* Note: Victoria case count includes a case detected in NSW. Under the National Notifiable Diseases Surveillance System reporting requirements the case is considered a Victorian case.

Further details:

- 15 of the initially reported cases in Australia all had a direct or indirect travel history to Wuhan, China
- 10 cases, including 1 death, are associated with the Diamond Princess cruise ship repatriation flight from Japan
- 18 cases are reported to have had a direct or indirect travel link to Iran
- 39 cases are reported to have had a direct or indirect travel link to countries including the United States of America, United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Italy, Iceland, Singapore, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Nepal, Egypt, Austria, France, Spain, Hong Kong.
- 27 cases, including 2 deaths, do not have a reported history of overseas travel
    - 8 of these cases are associated with an aged care facility in NSW. 2 residents of this facility have sadly died
    - 2 cases are either directly or indirectly associated with attendance at a workshop
    - 17 cases are close contacts of known cases, with further details pending
- The likely place of exposure for a further 3 newly reported cases is under investigation

Of the 112 Australian cases reported, 24 of these cases are reported to have recovered.

For questions about testing or the welfare of people with the virus, contact yourstate or territory health authority.

Across the world

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> Across the world, there have been more than 117,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) and more than 4,200 reported deaths.

The majority of cases and deaths associated with COVID-19 have been reported from mainland China.

There have been more than 36,000 cases, including approximately 1,100 deaths, reported from 113 countries and regions outside mainland China.

The majority of new cases are reported from Italy, Iran, and the Republic of Korea.

The majority of deaths outside mainland China have been in Italy and Iran.

> Of confirmed cases reported globally, the case fatality rate is approximately 3.6%. The case fatality rate in countries and regions outside mainland China is approximately 3.1%.

If you're planning any overseas travel, or have returned from an at risk country, see and follow the travellers and visitors information below.

Why is there an alert

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

On 27 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced the activation of the 'Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

Learn more about coronavirus (COVID-19)

Find out more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and how to protect yourself

Separate fact from fiction by reading coronavirus myth busters on the World Health Organization website. This includes information about when and how to wear a surgical mask

We also have a series of information sheets to help you, your family, health professionals, aged care workers, educational facilities, and the travel industry.

> **Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources**
>
> A collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources in Simplified or Traditional Chinese

A collection of resources about coronavirus (COVID-19) in Simplified or Traditional Chinese.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources in Farsi

A collection of resources about coronavirus (COVID-19) in Farsi.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources in Korean

A collection of resources about coronavirus (COVID-19) in Korean.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) resources in Italian

A collection of resources about coronavirus (COVID-19) in Italian.

Information for the health sector

View our resources for health professionals, including pathology providers and healthcare managers.

Also read the 2019-nCoV National Guidelines for Public Health Units that are regularly updated by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA).

Read the Chief Medical Officer Professor Brendan Murphy's letter to doctors about the COVID-19 outbreak and the Commonwealth's support for the central role doctors play in our national response.

Read the joint statement from the Minister for Aged Care and Senior Australians, Minister Colbeck, and Australian Chief Medical Officer, Professor Brendan Murphy, about ensuring the delivery of safe, quality care to senior Australians.

For information about the epidemiology of cases in Australia and overseas, read the weekly epidemiological reports.

Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (the COVID-19 Plan) was endorsed by the AHPPC on 17 February 2020.

The Australian Government will continue to monitor the emerging information and evidence closely. It will work with jurisdictions, through key committees and other relevant experts, to adapt the COVID-19 Plan as new information becomes available.

Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (the COVID-19 Plan) guides the Australian health sector response.

If you are at risk

In Australia, the people most at risk of getting the virus are those who have recently been in in a high risk country/region and people who have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of coronavirus.

If you have returned from a country or region that is at higher risk for COVID-19 you can not attend work if you work in a setting with vulnerable people.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses, other categories of people at most risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness
- people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions
- very young children and babies*
- people in group residential settings
- people in detention facilities

*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.

Travellers and visitors

On 5 March 2020, the Australian Government extended existing travel restrictions to include the Republic of Korea. All travel restrictions will be reviewed again before 13 March 2020.

As part of our ongoing strategy of containment and minimising risk to the Australian community, we are implementing additional screening of passengers at Australian airports.

Australian Border Force liaison officers at overseas airports will work with airlines to identify travellers who should not board.

Airlines will also be required to refuse uplift for anyone identified as being unwell.

Any passengers identified as unwell on the flight will be identified and referred for further assessment upon arrival.

Higher risk

The Australian Government considers the following countries to be at higher risk for COVID-19:

- Mainland China
- Iran
- Italy
- Republic of Korea

There are travel restrictions for travellers from mainland China, Iran, Republic of Korea and Italy.

If you are returning from mainland China or Iran you should isolate yourself for 14 days after leaving mainland China or Iran.

If you are travelling from the Republic of Korea, on or after 5 March, you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the time you left the Republic of Korea.

If you have left or transited through Italy on or after 11 March you must isolate yourself for 14 days from the time you left Italy.

This advice should be read in conjunction with the 'What you need to know' and 'Isolation guidance' information sheets.

Moderate risk

The Australian Government considers the following countries to be at moderate risk for COVID-19:

- Cambodia
- Hong Kong
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Singapore
- Thailand

If you have recently travelled to these countries, monitor your health for 14 days after leaving that country. If you develop a fever or cough, seek medical advice urgently and isolate yourself.

Travel advice

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has raised the level of advice for:

- Italy
- Iran
- Japan
- Republic of Korea (Daegu and Cheongdo)
- Mainland China
- Mongolia

DFAT has advised Australians to reconsider taking an overseas cruise at this time due to COVID-19, particularly people with underlying health concerns.

> Australians travelling overseas are encouraged to regularly review the Smartraveller website and subscribe for updates.

China, Iran and Republic of Korea

Do not travel to mainland China, Iran and Daegu (Republic of Korea). This is the latest China travel advice, Iran travel advice and Daegu travel advice from DFAT.

For Australians already in Iran, DFAT recommends travellers depart while commercial operations are available.

Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents) who are in mainland China, will not be allowed to enter Australia until 14 days after they have left or transited through mainland China.

Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents) who left Iran on or after 1 March, will not be allowed to enter Australia until 14 days after they have left or transited through Iran.

Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents of Australia) who are in the Republic of Korea on or after 5 March 2020 will not be allowed to enter Australia for 14 days from the time they have left or transited through the Republic of Korea.

Australian citizens, permanent residents, and their immediate family (including spouses, dependants and legal guardians) will still be able to enter Australia but will be required to isolate themselves for 14 days after the date they left China, Iran or the Republic of Korea.

If you:

- hold a visa for Australia or have applied for a visa, read the coronavirus fact sheet for visa holders and applicants
- are planning to travel to or transit through Australia, read the current travel restrictions
- plan to travel overseas, check the latest travel advice
- are concerned about someone overseas, call the DFAT consular emergency line

If you are on board an international flight and show signs of an infectious disease:

- the airline must report you to biosecurity officers
- biosecurity officers will assess you before you get off the plane
- you may be isolated or referred to a hospital

Australians on cruise ships

DFAT is providing consular assistance to Australians hospitalised and quarantined overseas because of COVID-19.

Grand Princess Cruise Ship

DFAT is waiting on advice on whether any of the four Australians on board the Grand Princess cruise ship, moored off the Californian coast, have contracted COVID-19.

The Australian Consulate-General in San Francisco stands ready to provide consular assistance to Australian citizens on board.

International students

Year 11 and 12 students

Year 11 and 12 students who remain in China (outside Hubei Province) due to Australian travel restrictions have been offered a strict pathway to resume their studies. This is in recognition of

the importance of the final 2 years of school.

Students who are completing their senior secondary schooling can apply for an exemption to the 1 February 2020 COVID-19 travel restrictions applied to foreign nationals who have been in mainland China (except Hubei Province). The exemptions will be considered on a case by case basis.

Australian Border Force has information for student visa holders.

We are delivering more Australian education services online and offshore for international students. To find out more and for support, go to coronavirus updates for international students on the Study in Australia website.

What we are doing

Australia is well prepared.

Our first class health system includes mechanisms for early detection and effective management of cases and contacts. Our plans include a range of interventions to minimise transmission and mitigate the impact of the outbreak.

Australian Government agencies and state and territory governments are working together to coordinate an evidence-based response. This includes:

- applying travel restrictions to reduce the number of travellers from mainland China, Iran and the Republic of Korea. This evening a travel ban will be implemented for Italy
- applying a 14-day isolation period to people at risk of getting coronavirus
- continuing to screen travellers who arrive in Australia
- tracing coronavirus cases
- continuing with border surveillance
- providing information in English and Chinese based on the latest medical advice, including through Facebook, Twitter, Weibo, WeChat and Chinese newspapers
- applying enhanced border measures at international air and sea ports, including announcements and signs

P2 and surgical masks have been made available from the National Medical Stockpile as part of the Government's response to COVID-19. The Government is also investigating further sources of supply for personal protective equipment, both internationally and domestically.

State and territory health authorities are:

- testing anyone who shows symptoms of the virus
- monitoring close contacts of confirmed cases every day

Find out more

You can also visit our Facebook and Twitter pages or call us if you still have questions about coronavirus:

Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call this line if you are seeking information on novel coronavirus. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1800 020 080

View contact

Departmental media enquiries

Contact for members of the media

news [at]
health.gov.au

02 6289 7400

View contact

Tags:

Communicable diseases | Emergency health management | Travel health

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