

# Coronavirus disease - casual contact

What you need to know

**You have been identified as being a casual contact of someone diagnosed with 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Please read this information carefully.**

## What is novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans.

The most recently discovered coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness.

## What is a casual contact?

A casual contact is someone who has been face-to-face for less than 15 minutes with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or been in the same closed space for less than 2 hours, when that person was potentially infectious. Being a casual contact means there may be a risk of becoming infected with novel coronavirus.

## What do I need to do?

Now you have been identified to have had casual contact with someone who is confirmed to have infection with the novel coronavirus while they were infectious, you must:

- Monitor your health until 14 days after you were last exposed to the infectious person.
- Watch for any of these signs and symptoms:
  - fever
  - cough
  - shortness of breath
  - other early symptoms can include chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, runny nose, muscle pain or diarrhoea.

## What if I develop symptoms?

**If you develop any of the symptoms listed above:**

- Call a doctor or hospital and inform them that you have had contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus and you have symptoms.
- Put on a mask if you have one.
- Keep yourself away from others (for example, in a different room).
- Do not go to work, school, university, work or attend public places or events. Do not use public transport or taxi services.

- When you arrive at the general practice or hospital, tell them again that you are a contact of a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.
- Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only.

Your doctor or staff at the hospital emergency department will ensure you are wearing a mask and take you through to a room away from others.

The doctor will contact our department on 1300 651 160. They may organise to take nose and throat swabs to send for testing for the novel coronavirus.

**If you are experiencing severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:**

- Call 000 and request an ambulance.
- Inform the ambulance officers that you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

## How can I prevent the spread of the virus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water before and after eating as well as after attending the toilet.
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow.

## Should I wear a face mask?

Face masks are not recommended if you do not have symptoms. A facemask will not protect you against becoming infected.

If you are ill, you should put on a mask if you have one to prevent spreading the infection to others. You will be given a mask to wear by your doctor.

## Where can I find out more information?

Call the Department of Health and Human Services on to discuss any questions you have. If you need a translator first call 131 450, then request the hotline on 1300 651 160.

For Victorian updates to the current incident, go to: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus>

For national updates: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/latest-information-about-novel-coronavirus>

For international updates: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus>

WHO resources <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 131 450 if required, or email [Public Health branch](mailto:public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

© State of Victoria, Australia, Department of Health and Human Services February, 2020