



## Information for health care and residential care workers

If you or your staff have travelled from a country or region that is at higher risk for COVID-19, or think you may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, special restrictions apply to you.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with the 'What you need to know' and 'Isolation guidance' information sheets at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

Go to [www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers) for the current list of higher risk countries and these other information sheets.

### Can staff go to work?

In the following scenarios staff **can not** go to work if they have:

- left, or transited through a high risk country that requires isolation in the last 14 days, from leaving that country. Go to [www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers](http://www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers) for specific advice on isolation requirements.
- been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days (they must isolate themselves for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case).

Employees who are in isolation due to one of the above situations should alert their employer. Depending on the type of work, and provided the employee is well, they may want to discuss alternative arrangements such as working from home. If staff provide a caring role outside an employment setting they should arrange alternate assistance for these patients / care recipients. See the 'Isolation guidance' information sheets at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### What should I tell my staff?

Employers should provide information and brief all employees and contract staff, including domestic and cleaning staff where applicable, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus. You should inform staff who meet the above criteria that they should remain isolated in their home. Employees should advise their employer if they develop symptoms during the isolation period, particularly if they have been in the workplace. Public health authorities may contact employers in the event an employee is confirmed to have coronavirus.

### What precautions should I take when cleaning?

When cleaning, staff should minimise the risk of being infected with coronavirus by wearing gloves and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after wearing gloves. If cleaning rooms or areas of the workplace where a person with a confirmed case of coronavirus or a person in isolation has frequented staff may wish to wear a surgical mask as an added precaution. If a confirmed case of coronavirus or a person in isolation is in a room that cleaning staff need to enter, they may ask them to put on a surgical mask if they have one available.

### Can food and water spread coronavirus?

Some coronaviruses can potentially survive in the gastrointestinal tract however, food-borne spread is unlikely when food is properly cooked and prepared. With good food preparation and good hand hygiene, it is highly unlikely that you will become infected with coronavirus through food.

It is unknown at this time if the virus is able to survive in sewerage. Those who work closely with sewerage should take the same precautions as those outlined above for cleaners. Drinking water in Australia is high quality and is well treated. It is not anticipated that drinking water will be affected by coronavirus.

## How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 meters from people).

## More information

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness—not coronavirus.

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

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of each state or territory public health agency is available at [www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts](http://www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts)

If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.