



Information for hotels and hotel staff

If you 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

Go to www.health.gov.au/covid19-travellers for the current list of higher risk countries.

Can I go to work?

Hotel staff **can not** work in hotels if they have:

- left or transited through a higher risk country that requires isolation (go to 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).

If you develop symptoms (listed below) within 14 days of being in a higher risk country, or within 14 days of contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, you should seek urgent medical care. Your doctor will liaise with public health authorities to manage your care. You must remain isolated in the hotel, your home, or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

I am an employer – what should I tell my staff?

Hotel management should provide information and brief all employees and contract staff, including domestic and cleaning staff, on relevant information and procedures to prevent the spread of coronavirus to people in the hotel setting. You should inform staff who meet the above criteria that they should remain isolated in their home. Workers should advise their employer if they develop symptoms during the isolation period, particularly if they have been in the workplace.

What is this virus?

Some coronaviruses can cause illness similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

The virus is called 'novel' because it is new. It has not been detected before this outbreak. Most people currently infected live in mainland China. There are cases of coronavirus reported in other countries. It is likely that the virus originally came from an animal, and there is now evidence that it can spread from person-to-person.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include (but are not limited to) fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue and shortness of breath.

How is the virus spread?

The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- direct contact with a person whilst they are infectious;

- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) that were contaminated by droplets from secretions coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

For how long can a person spread the infection to other people?

The length of time that a person is infectious, that is, can spread the infection to others, is not yet known. However, there has been emerging evidence of asymptomatic or minimally symptomatic infection and pre-symptomatic transmission in at least one case cluster. It is therefore likely that a person can spread the infection from before the time they first develop symptoms until up to one day after symptoms stop.

Therefore, the Australian Government Department of Health is currently recommending an isolation period of 14 days for returned travellers from higher risk countries, and for contacts of confirmed cases.

Who is most at risk of a serious illness?

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly. From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at most risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- 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.

What if I have already returned to work but should have been isolated?

You should inform your employer as soon as possible that you have recently travelled to a high risk country, or had contact with a confirmed case, and isolate yourself for the remainder of the 14 day period.

If you go on to develop symptoms:

- immediately isolate yourself from others in your home;
- call your usual doctor or local hospital and tell them you may have novel coronavirus infection; and
- when you get to the doctor's clinic or hospital, tell them again that you may have novel coronavirus infection; and
- as soon as possible, please call your employer to notify them that you have developed symptoms and will be tested for the novel coronavirus.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing:

- call **000** and ask for an ambulance; and
- tell the ambulance officers that you may have novel coronavirus infection.

Your doctor will test you for coronavirus and provide advice on your care. You will also be contacted by public health officers who will provide you with more information and who will coordinate with your employer as needed.

How can we help prevent the spread of the virus?

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).

Can hotel patrons bring in the virus?

The risk of hotel patrons who may be infected staying in hotel settings is currently extremely low. It is important that the hotel provides patrons with information about coronavirus to prevent spread upon their arrival to the hotel.

What if hotel patrons need to self-isolate?

If hotel patrons need to self-isolate in a hotel, it is important that staff take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. The risk to staff should be low if they wash their hands well and the patrons do not have symptoms. Staff should avoid close contact with these guests but it is safe to be in the same room (at a distance) without protective equipment when delivering food, which we recommend that the guests have in their room.

Is it safe to clean?

Cleaning staff should avoid close contact with guests who have self-isolated. They should wear gloves while cleaning, and use alcohol hand rub before and after wearing gloves. As an added precaution, your cleaning staff may wish to wear a surgical mask while cleaning the room. Before entering the room, cleaning staff may inquire if people are well, and ask them to put on a surgical mask.

What if a patron becomes ill?

If a person who has self-isolated develops symptoms, they should be seen urgently by a doctor at a hospital and the relevant state or territory Public Health authority should be contacted. It is important to phone ahead to the hospital or doctor to get advice. Staff should avoid contact with guests who become unwell and seek appropriate medical advice if this occurs.

More information

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to 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 your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

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