



## Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on coronavirus (COVID-19)

Welcome to the electronic newsletter update to provide key information to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, communities and stakeholders. Things are changing quickly, and it's important to stay informed. Visit [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au) and [niaa.gov.au](https://www.niaa.gov.au)

### Key Messages

- New online training modules for health professionals
- Resources toolkit for health professionals
- Don't skip your flu shot - protect you and your family from flu
- Keep our families safe from violence
- Three stage plan to ease restrictions and stay COVIDSafe
- Sending kids to school
- Tips for talking with kids about coronavirus
- Important health messages

### New online training modules for health professionals

Five online training modules are being developed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals in responding to cases of COVID-19 and support public health efforts to manage outbreaks in remote communities.

The first two modules, 'Introduction to COVID-19', and 'Contact Tracing in Remote Communities', are now available [online](#).

These modules were developed in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group on COVID-19.



### Resources toolkit for health professionals

Our amazing health workers are doing an incredible job keeping our communities COVIDSafe, and we all owe them a huge amount of gratitude. Let's make sure we are supporting our health workers as much as possible. The more we help them, the more they can help us.

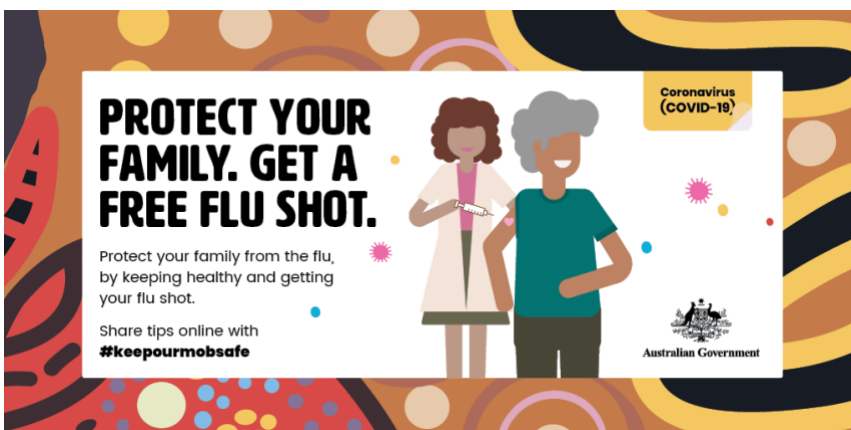
The teams at CATSINaM, AIDA, IAHA and NATSIHWA have developed a [COVID19 resource toolkit](#) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals.

The pack includes tips and information to help health workers care for themselves, as well as resources to share in community.

### Don't skip your flu shot - protect you and your family from flu

[Professor Tom Calma AO video – Get your flu shot](#)

You can share these social media graphics to let others in the community know how important it is to get the flu shot.



## **Keep our families safe from violence**

Tough times don't excuse tougher times at home, even in a crisis. There's no place for abuse or domestic violence.

Look out for people in our communities who may be at risk by:

- keeping in contact with people
- checking in to make sure they are OK
- making sure they don't feel like they are completely alone and without any support.

If you are worried about your immediate safety, contact 000. For confidential advice and counselling contact 1800 RESPECT.

## **Three stage plan to ease restrictions and stay COVID safe**

The Prime Minister has outlined a 3-step plan to provide a pathway for states and territories to move toward COVIDSafe communities. This plan involves careful steps to ease restrictions while keeping everyone safe and containing the spread of the virus.

Some of the restrictions relating to where we can go in public and how many people we can gather with have already begun to be eased.

The changes are different in each state and territory, so make sure you stay up to date with the latest information on restrictions for your area. You can visit [Australia.gov.au](https://australia.gov.au) for the latest advice, and links to each state and territory.

Biosecurity restrictions remain in place to stop people travelling into remote communities. These restrictions were put in place to protect remote residents especially Elders. It is still very important to stop the virus spreading from cities and towns into remote communities. Information on biosecurity measures in place in remote communities is available at [niaa.gov.au](https://niaa.gov.au)

Even though some restrictions are being eased, we need to keep practising physical distancing (two big steps) and good hygiene to stop the virus from spreading in our homes, workplaces and communities. It is important to remember, if shopping centres or public spaces are overcrowded, making it difficult to practise social distancing guidelines, don't enter the space. Come back at a time when it is not as busy or crowded.

And most importantly of all, stay home if you are having cold or flu symptoms, and get tested for coronavirus.

## **Sending your kids back to school**

Many students will start returning to school and classrooms as the coronavirus restrictions start to ease.

The Chief Medical Officer supported by a team of medical professionals has advised it is safe for children to be at school. This is because levels of the virus have remained low for several weeks in a row and children are at lower risk than adults from this virus.

Information about how schools will operate during this time will be provided by your school. Speak to your local school principal, teacher, or Aboriginal Education officers about any worries you might have.

### **Talking with kids about Coronavirus**

It's completely normal to be feeling worried and stressed at the moment. It is important to remember that our kids might also be feeling the same.

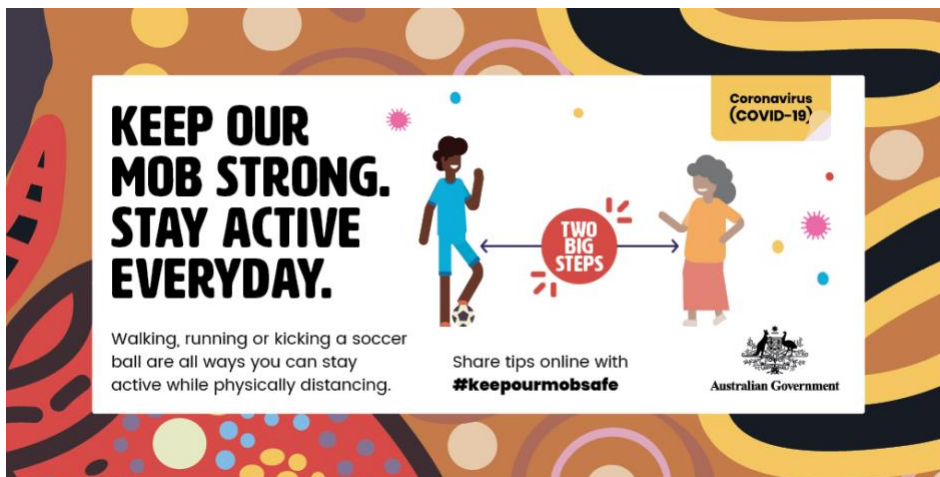
Their lives have had some big changes and they will be watching adults closely and picking up on moods and behaviours. Talk to kids about how they are feeling, it can help them to feel better too.

Here's a few tips for talking with young people:

- Pick your time and place carefully. Think about the best time to chat and in an environment where your child will feel relaxed and comfortable to talk freely. Choose a time when you can give them your full attention.
- Let them know it's normal to feel scared or confused about things happening at the moment. Talk in a calm and reassuring tone.
- Ask questions to find out what your kids already know about the virus. This also helps to find out if they are hearing the wrong information.
- Acknowledge their feelings and don't minimise their concerns.
- Make sure to explain to them that coronavirus has nothing to do with how someone looks or where they are from. Remind them that bullying is wrong.
- Talk about the strength and connection to culture that we can draw on during this time.
- Share stories about people who are working hard to keep our community safe, doing this will reassure them and it will comfort them to know that people are taking action.

It's also important to look after yourself. The better you are coping the more you can help others. If you are feeling worried or upset, take time for yourself and reach out to others in the community for support.

Remind young people that you care, and you're there for a chat at any time. Keep checking in and make it an ongoing conversation. Visit the [Raising Children's Network](#) for more information.



## Important health messages

It's important to stay safe while restrictions are easing. We all need to keep working hard to protect our families, our Elders and communities and stay safe from coronavirus.

- Keep your distance, two big steps, from other people to protect our communities.
- Where possible, wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and keep your hands clean.
- Cough or sneeze into your arm or elbow, not your hands.
- Put your tissues in the bin after you use them and wash your hands after.
- Avoid touching your face with dirty hands – especially your eyes, nose and mouth. This is where the virus can enter your body.
- Clean surfaces regularly such as tables, kitchen benches, door handles, railings as well as commonly used items such as toys, phones, keys and wallets. Try and use antibacterial spray or disinfectant to remove the germs.
- If you are experiencing any cold or flu like symptoms it is really important to get tested for COVID-19 and stay at home and away from others if possible.
- Don't smoke, and don't share smokes with other people. Call the Aboriginal Quitline on 13 7848 and yarn to a counsellor about quitting. You can also download the My QuitBuddy for extra support or talk to your local health worker.
- Keep up regular appointments, and keep taking any prescribed medications, especially if you have a chronic illness. It's important to look after your health, especially during this time.

- Download the COVIDSafe app so public health workers will be able to contact you quickly if someone you have been around is diagnosed with coronavirus.
- Stay up to date and keep connected via:
  - [Australia.gov.au](https://www.australia.gov.au)
  - [Department of Health Indigenous resources page](#)
  - [Subscribe](#) to this newsletter
  - Download the official 'Coronavirus Australia' app
- Together, we can keep our mob COVIDSafe and stop the spread.

**HELP OUR COMMUNITIES TO STAY HEALTHY, STRONG AND CONNECTED, BY SHARING TIPS ONLINE #KEEPOURMOBSAFE**

