



Australian Government

Department of Health

USE OF FACE MASKS IN THE COMMUNITY

What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory infection that spreads from person to person through droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.

It can also spread by touching objects or surfaces that have droplets from an infected person on them, and then touching your mouth or face.

Should I wear a mask?

With the rates of COVID-19 rising in some parts of Australia, some of us now need to wear a face mask in public – it's either required or recommended. It's important that you stay up to date with the advice in your local area. If you are in an area where your state, territory, or local government has advised you should or must wear a mask in public, please follow their directions. Regularly check state or territory government websites or visit Australia.gov.au.

Please remember, masks are helpful to stop people who have the virus from passing it on to others in the community. Please be aware they are only effective when used with other infection-control measures.

Even if you wear a face mask you should follow physical distancing, good hand and respiratory hygiene, and staying at home when unwell.

How to use my mask properly?

It is important to wear a mask properly to avoid increasing the risk of infection to yourself and others. Touching or removing the mask can contaminate your hands.

Please wash your hands before putting on the mask, straight after removing it, and every time you touch it during use.

When wearing it, make sure it covers both your nose and mouth and fits snugly under your chin, over the bridge of your nose and against the sides of your face.

Don't let it hang around the neck and please try not to touch the front of your mask at any time. If your mask gets damp, you need to change it.

What do I do with my mask after I have used it?

If your mask is a single use mask, only wear it once and then put it in the bin.

If you have a reusable cloth mask, put it in a plastic bag until you are able to wash it.

Cloth masks can be washed in the washing machine with other clothes.

You can also hand-wash using soap and the hottest appropriate water setting for the cloth it's made out of.

Fully dry the cloth mask in a clothes dryer or in fresh air before you re-use it.

Stay COVID free

To protect our communities, everyone should continue to do the three most important things to stop the spread of the virus:

- Stay at least 1.5 metres away from others whenever and wherever we can.
- Practise good hygiene by washing hands regularly with soap and water. If soap and water is not available use an alcohol-based hand rub. Do not touch your face, and remember to cough and sneeze into your elbow instead of your hand.
- Download the COVIDSafe app. The app helps to keep track of people you have been in close contact with.

Now more than ever, it is important you stay home if you have cold or flu like symptoms. If you have a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, get tested for coronavirus. We can all do our bit to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Updates to the COVIDSafe app

In addition to English, the COVIDSafe app is now available in Arabic, Simplified and Traditional Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. The app will also be available in Italian and Greek soon.

The COVIDSafe app helps public health officials to notify people who have been in contact with someone with COVID-19. If you have downloaded the app, you can choose to give health officials access to the information on the app. This allows them to quickly identify and contact the right people and prevent the virus from spreading.

More information about COVID-19

It is important to stay informed through official sources. Visit [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au), call the Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 or the translating and interpreting service on 131 450.