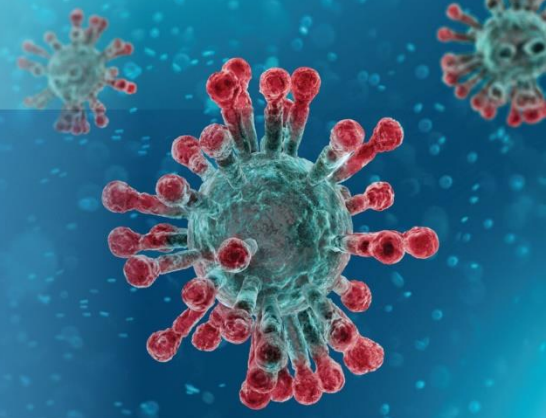


Novel Coronavirus

8 March 2020



Update for Schools and Families

Novel coronavirus is an illness caused by a new virus that can spread from person to person by close contact.

Most people infected get better over a week or two, and it seems children usually only get mild illness, like a bad cold.

While coronavirus is causing significant community concern, remember that most people in Tasmania today with symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat are likely suffering from the normal, everyday illnesses we have in our community – not coronavirus.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus?

Coronavirus causes illness that ranges from a mild cough to pneumonia.

People with coronavirus may have a fever (high temperature), cough, sore throat, fatigue (extreme tiredness) and shortness of breath for no obvious reason. Some people recover easily; some (mostly elderly people) get very sick very quickly.

Who is at risk?

For now, in Australia, those most at risk of getting the virus are:

- people who have in the past 14 days been in a country considered to be at higher risk for coronavirus; currently mainland China, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand (this list of countries may change; check the Australian Government Department of Health website for the latest information)
- people who have been in close contact with someone who is known to have the virus.

Information from around the world so far suggests:

- babies, children and young people are likely to have mild illness
- elderly people and people with serious underlying health conditions (like cancer, lung disease and heart disease) are at higher risk of severe illness.

What should I do if my child gets sick?

If your child gets sick, do what you would normally do *unless* your child is at risk of having coronavirus, as outlined in the box above. If your child gets sick and is at risk and is sick with suggestive symptoms, phone the Public Health Hotline (1800 671 738) straight away.

Should I send my child to school?

There is **no need** to keep your child home from school or childcare if they are well

Children should **not** attend school or childcare if:

- they are unwell
- they have been in close contact with someone known to currently have the virus and been told by Public Health Services to stay in home isolation
- they (or anyone) currently who has:
 - left (or transited through) mainland **China** (not including Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan) in the past 14 days
 - left (or transited through) **Iran** in the past 14 days
 - left any other country in the past 14 days for which the Australian Government recommends returning travellers stay in home isolation for 14 days after departure (this list of countries may change; check the Australian Government Department of Health website for the latest information).

Do I or my child need to wear a facemask?

If you are well, you don't need to wear a facemask to protect yourself against coronavirus, unless you are in close (within a large step) contact for more than a few minutes with someone suspected or known to have the virus. This is generally only healthcare workers and people caring for household members who are suspected or known to have the virus.



Using facemasks in public is only helpful when they are worn by people who are sick with the virus, to stop the virus spreading to others.

Washing your hands often and well is the best way to protect yourself.

How can I help slow the spread of illness?

- **Wash your hands often and well**, with soap and running water or alcohol-based hand rub; show your child how to wash their hands well.
- **Always cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.** Use a tissue, then put the tissue in the bin. If you don't have a tissue, use the inside of your elbow. Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.
- **Stay informed.** For the latest general information, go to [Australian Government Department of Health](https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov)¹ or [Tasmanian Government Department of Health](https://www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus)² or phone the national coronavirus health information line, 1800 020 080.



¹ www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov

² www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus