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Coronavirus (Covid-19): Guide for Employees

COVID-19 continues to spread across the world with increasing case numbers in a growing number of countries on several continents. The case numbers of Coronavirus continue to grow in Australia. This communication is for employees in relation to information about Covid-19 and actions that should be undertaken to mitigate the risk of spreading the virus.

What is the Coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a virus that can cause respiratory illnesses. Symptoms of the virus can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Affected people may experience:

- fever

- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and headaches, and

- difficulty breathing.

How can we prevent the spread of coronavirus?

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

- wash hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet

- cover coughs and sneezes, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser

- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging, and other intimate contact).

Can I come to work?

In the following scenarios you **cannot** come to work if you have:

- left, or transited through higher risk country (www.health.gov.au/covid19-countries) in the last 14 days (you must isolate yourself for 14 days from leaving)

- been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus in the last 14 days (you must isolate yourself for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case).

If you meet any of the criteria above, then you should remain isolated at home and alert the company as soon as possible. Depending on the type of work, and provided you are well, you may want to discuss alternative arrangements such as working from home.

What do I do if I get sick?

If you develop mild symptoms:

- Isolate yourself from others at home and use a separate bathroom if available
- Put on a surgical mask and if you don't have one, practise good sneeze/cough hygiene
- Practise good hand hygiene
- Call a doctor or hospital and tell them your recent travel or close contact history.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing:
- Call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers of your recent travel or close contact history.

Isolation guidelines

When travelling home or to your hotel to start isolation use personal transport, such as a car, to minimise exposure to others. If you need to use public transport (e.g. taxis, ride-hail services, trains, buses and trams), follow the precautions outlined in the public transport guide at www.health.gov.au.

During the 14 days of isolation, you stay at home or in your hotel and don't go to public places including work, school, childcare, university or public gatherings. Only people who usually live with you should be in the home. Do not see visitors. If you are in a hotel, avoid contact with other guests or staff.

If you are well, there is no need to wear surgical masks at home. Ask others who are not in isolation to get food and necessities for you. If you must leave home, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask. If you don't have a mask, take care to not cough or sneeze on others. For more information about when to wear a mask, visit www.health.gov.au.

Monitor symptoms

When in isolation, monitor yourself for symptoms including fever, cough or shortness of breath. Other early symptoms include chills, body aches, sore throat, runny nose and muscle pain.

Payment and Leave

If you have contracted the Coronavirus you may use the following accrued entitlements:

- Accrued Personal/carer's leave entitlements – you may be asked to provide a medical certificate.
- Accrued Annual leave/long service leave – this can be used if you do not have enough personal/carer's leave.
- The company may direct you to leave or not attend work and attend a medical professional for assessment if we have a reasonable suspicion that you may be exhibiting signs of Coronavirus. In this event, the company will pay for you to see the doctor as well as your time away from the workplace until such time that the medical confirmation is obtained that you are unfit for work. Once you are certified as unfit, then you will be required to take a form of leave (whether paid or unpaid).

Returning to work

Before returning to work, you must obtain a medical certificate certifying you do not have the Coronavirus and are fit to return to work and supply it to the company.

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.
- 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.