

Older Australians and Coronavirus

Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is a highly contagious disease that spreads from person to person. The virus has spread quickly throughout the world, infecting millions of people and causing hundreds of thousands of deaths.

How does it spread?

Coronavirus spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes, and small droplets from the nose or mouth travel through the air, or land on objects and surfaces around the person.

You can catch Coronavirus if you:

- Breathe these droplets in, or
- Touch a surface with these droplets and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth

How can I avoid catching it?

You can protect yourself from Coronavirus by **physical distancing** yourself from others.

This means:

- Keeping a 1.5 metre distance away from others where possible
- Temporarily stopping face to face visits
- Avoiding any non-essential travel
- Having groceries and medications delivered

What happens if I catch it?

If you catch Coronavirus, you may experience:

- Fever
- Coughing
- A sore throat
- Difficulty breathing

If you are experiencing serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, call 000 for urgent medical help.

Why do older people need to take further precaution?

Whilst people of all ages can catch and carry the virus, older people are more likely to become severely ill if they catch the virus.

The majority of deaths from Coronavirus worldwide have been in people 60 and older.



To prevent the spread of the virus, some habits to adopt include:

- Sneezing or coughing into your elbow
- Washing your hands thoroughly with soap for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

If you are sick and think you might have COVID-19, check your symptoms using healthdirect's Coronavirus Symptom Checker at [healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details)

If the Symptom Checker tells you to contact your GP, please make sure you call your doctor's clinic first, before your visit.



Stay informed

The following are trustworthy sources of information about Coronavirus:

- **Australian Government Department of Health** provide regular updates and advice in relation to Coronavirus at [health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert)
- **State Health Departments** have specific information about cases, testing centres, and physical distancing laws at [health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments](https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments)
- **The World Health Organization** provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of Coronavirus at [who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)
- **National Coronavirus Helpline** is open 24 hours, 7 days a week and will answer any questions you have about Coronavirus. Call 1800 020 080.

Source • Website: research.unsw.edu.au/ageingfutures
• Email: ageingfutures@unsw.edu.au



UNSW
SYDNEY



UNSW Ageing
Futures Institute