

AUTUMN/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2020

CLINIC NEWS

Changes at Ovens Medical to help Protect you from Covid-19

COVID-19 - Update

The Ovens Medical Group is taking a proactive approach in rapidly responding to the Covid 19 pandemic, in order to protect our staff and patients and continue to provide the best primary medical care possible.

All staff are strictly following the recommended personal hygiene and social distancing measures. Doctors and nurses are all wearing surgical scrubs and masks.

If you do have symptoms of a respiratory infection (cough, sore throat, run nose, breathlessness or fever), please always ring the clinic first for advice. Each day one doctor is dedicated to seeing patients with acute respiratory illness. This doctor will see you in a dedicated room at the rear of the clinic and the doctor will be wearing full personal protective equipment (face shield, mask, gown and gloves).

We have ceased using our waiting room and are now doing a large proportion of consultations via Telehealth (telephone or video).

More information about our [Telehealth service](#).

When you do come in for an appointment our staff will first check if you have any symptoms of a respiratory infection. Our staff will ask you to wait in your car or outside the clinic and our reception staff will ring you to come in when the doctor is ready to see you. We ask all patients to sanitise their hands on

entry and observe social distancing regulations.

If you need a prescription without a face to face consultation, where possible we will send it to your local pharmacy



The Expert Advice Matters campaign

The RACGP has launched a TV and online campaign that reinforces the value of consulting a GP for expert advice. We want patients to know they should continue to consult their GP for any health matter, and that doing so is safe and easy.

You'll see the campaign on national television including Channel Nine and Sky News Australia, and Channel 10 in regional areas. It will also be advertised across online social channels such as Facebook and Instagram.

Viewers will be directed to expertadvicematters.com.au for further information on how to easily and safely consult their GP during the pandemic.

Patients need to be reassured that you're still available to give advice on all health matters, in a safe and easy way. So we're letting patients across Australia know that:

- they can talk to their usual GP about their health concerns (including those unrelated to COVID-19)
- telephone and video (telehealth) appointments are available to everyone. Some consultations will need to be bulk billed, while others are billed just like a normal face-to-face appointment
- in-person appointments are still available, and can be attended safely.

Coronavirus

What is coronavirus disease?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that may cause illness in animals or humans.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness.

What are the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Many people who contract coronavirus (COVID-19) will suffer only mild symptoms. However early indications are that the elderly and people with pre-existing medical conditions are more at risk of experiencing severe symptoms.

The most common symptoms reported include:

- [Fever](#)
- Breathing difficulties such as breathlessness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- [Fatigue](#) or tiredness

[How does coronavirus \(COVID-19\) spread?](#)

Coronavirus spreads through close contact with an infected person; mostly face-to-face or within a household. It cannot jump across a room or be carried for long distances in the air.

Close contact means greater than 15 minutes face-to-face or the sharing of a closed space for more than two hours with a confirmed case.

A close contact could include any person meeting any of the following criteria:

- living in the same household or household-like setting (for example, a boarding school or hostel)
- direct contact with the body fluids or laboratory specimens of a confirmed case
- a person who spent two hours or longer in the same room
- face-to-face contact for more than 15 minutes with the case in any other setting not listed above.
- [How is coronavirus \(COVID-19\) diagnosed and treated?](#)
- There are tests to diagnose coronavirus. The [Department of Health and Human Services](#) has advice on when and where to get those tests done.
- If you have serious symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, call 000 and ask for an ambulance.
- There is no specific treatment for disease caused by COVID-19. However, many of the symptoms can be treated and so any treatment will be based on your clinical condition.

[How to reduce your risk of coronavirus?](#)

The ways to reduce your risk of coronavirus are to:

- **Wash** hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Dry with paper towel or hand dryer.
- **Try** not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- **Cover** your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
- **Isolate** yourself at home if you feel sick. If you take medication ensure you have adequate supplies.
- **Phone** your doctor (GP) first if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do.
- **Continue** healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep, and now is the time to quit smoking. Call the Quitline 137 848.
- **Don't** wear a face mask if you are well.
- **Buy** an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 per cent alcohol.
- **Get** the flu shot (available April).
- **Avoid** shaking hands.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and self-isolation](#)
- The Australian Government has [information](#) on what to do if you've been asked to self-isolate at home or elsewhere.

Where can I find out more information?

- For Victorian updates - [Department of Health and Human Services Victoria - coronavirus disease section](#)
- For national updates - [Australian Government's Department of Health - News](#)
- For international updates - the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)- coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [World Health Organisation resources: Coronavirus](#)

Ref:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionandtreatments/novel-coronavirus>

Flu

Vaccinations

for 2020

We have commenced our 2020 Influenza vaccination program and we are endeavouring to administer these as soon as possible.

Our staff are keeping lists of patients who have asked to have a vaccine and will ring you back with an appointment.

The following patient groups are eligible for a free (government funded) influenza vaccination this year:

- All indigenous people older than 6 months.
- All people aged 65 years and older.
- All pregnant women.
- All children aged 6 months to less than 5 years.

People older than 6 months with chronic medical conditions such as:

- Diabetes
- Heat Disease
- Lung disease including chronic asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Kidney disease
- Neurological disease
- Immunosuppression (poor immunity)

If you do not fall into these categories you can still get an influenza immunisation either by getting a prescription from your doctor or just attending a local pharmacy where they can dispense and administer an influenza vaccine to anyone of 10years age and older.

For further information about the influenza immunisation, see:

www.health.gov.au/health-topics/immunisation

Tips for staying calm and healthy

It's important to look after your mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

In terms of your physical health, the most important thing you can do is maintain basic hygiene, particularly frequently washing your hands with soap or using hand sanitiser. For your mental wellbeing, there are a number of things you can do:

- Maintain a healthy diet, exercise and sleep regime.
- Talk to loved ones about worries and concerns.
- Engage in hobbies and enjoyable activities.
- Be prepared – ensure you have enough food, supplies and medication on hand. Ask for help collecting these items where possible.
- Avoid or reduce your use of alcohol and tobacco.
- You may feel stressed listening to the news, so make sure you receive

information through trusted and credible sources, rather than social media. Make sure one of those sources is specific to your state. This will help you feel more in control. If you can't access the internet, get a friend or family member to read to you or show you the most up-to-date information from credible sources

- [The coronavirus section on this site](#)
- [Australian Government coronavirus \(COVID-19\) health alert](#)
- [World Health Organization – coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Staying positive

While it might feel like we don't have control of current events, it's important to remember that we can do many things to feel empowered and enabled.

Find opportunities of sharing positive and hopeful stories with others, generate positive emotions by sharing memories, and take the opportunity to show acts of kindness.

Staying connected

It's important to stay connected with friends and family at this time to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

For older Australians, now might be the time to embrace technology. Younger family members can help you get set up and guide you through the process. Give it a go!

If you are more comfortable with the phone, call friends and family for regular catch-ups.

You could even write notes or letters.

For those in self-isolation or quarantine

Going into self-isolation or quarantine may feel daunting or overwhelming. Fear and anxiety about the pandemic can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions.

There are a number of ways to support your mental health during periods of self-isolation or quarantine.

- Remind yourself that this is a temporary period of isolation to slow the spread of the virus.
- Remember that your effort is helping others in the community avoid contracting the virus.
- Routines sound dull, but they're good for our mental health. Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time, eat at regular times, shower, and change your clothes. This will help you to manage your days and adjust when life starts to go back to normal.
- Try to maintain physical activity.
- Manage your stress levels, and if needed, increase your coping strategies (for example, listening to music, watching your favourite shows, meditation or exercise).
- Keep taking your medication. Phone or email your GP or pharmacist to find out how to get any new prescriptions you may need. If you're staying at home and that's disrupting your routine, set reminders to take your medicine when you need to.
- For those already managing mental health issues, continue to take any prescribed medication, continue with your treatment plan and monitor for any new symptoms.
- Seek professional support early if you're having difficulties.

Conversations with children and young people

Families and caregivers of children and young people should discuss coronavirus (COVID-19) in an open and honest way that

will be understood by the child or adolescent.

Talk about the facts without causing alarm, and in a way that is appropriate for their age and temperament. It is important to listen to any questions they may have, to let them know that they are safe and that it's normal to feel worried or concerned.

If the media or the news is getting too much for them, limit exposure for young children and encourage teenagers to limit their exposure or turn it off completely.

Further tips for caring for younger children:

- Ask children what they have heard about coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The way parents behave can have a significant effect on children. Keep conversations calm and focussed on the facts. Emphasise efforts that are being taken to contain the virus.
- Model health-promoting behaviours for your children. For example, teach them to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- Educate the entire family about good health habits. Talk about what each family member can do to help others outside of the immediate family.
- Include children in family discussions and plans, in an age appropriate way.
- Address any misconceptions children may have that could result in stigmatising people or groups of people in the community.

For Victorians aged 17-25

Young people will have higher social needs at this time.

They will be experiencing FOMO (fear of missing out), feeling disconnected, worried about the state of their friendships, their school and their academic performances. Be mindful that they may become overwhelmed by the persistent bad news both here in Australia and internationally.

If they are a bit older, they will be worried about losing casual work and the financial pressures that can bring.

It is important to tell young people that it is normal to feel stressed out about the current situation. Encourage regular exercise, good practices for communicating with others online and have conversations about how this is impacting them.,

We may need to offer more support during this time, be it social, emotional or financial.

Encourage younger people to rely on trusted information sources rather than social media.

Conversations with older Victorians

Families and caregivers of older people should discuss news of coronavirus (COVID-19) in an open and honest way. There are some practical things you can do:

- Keep in contact by phone or using technology like video chat that allows you to see each other.
- Ensure they have enough supplies and offer to pick up on their behalf.
- Make sure they are eating healthy foods and staying active.
- Stress the importance of social distancing and/or isolation for the sake of their own health and the health of others.
- Acknowledge their feelings of anxiety and distress when they are asked to modify their routines and activities.
- Help family members or neighbours establish a new daily or weekly routine.

Who to call to get help

There are plenty of ways to support other people, or be supported if you are feeling anxious or uncertain.

Lifeline Australia 13 11 14

A crisis support service offering short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.

www.lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

Mental health information and support for all Victorians

www.beyondblue.org.au

Eheadspace 1800 650 893

Online and webchat support and counselling for 12-25 year olds, their family and friends.

www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace/

Care in Mind - online and phone counselling for people living, working, or studying in Melbourne's northern, central, and western suburbs. Phone: 1300 096 269 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). [CareinMIND online counselling](#).

MensLine - professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men. Phone 1300 78 99 78 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

[MensLine online counselling](#).

Mindspot - free telephone and online service for people with stress, worry, anxiety, low mood or depression. It provides online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression and can help you find local services. Call 1800 61 44 34 (8am - 8pm, Monday - Friday; 8am-6pm, Saturday).

Suicide Call Back Service - mental health support, call back service: 1300 659 467 or online at suicidecallbackservice.org.au (24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Youth focused mental health and support services

Headspace - Call eheadspace on 1800 650 890 or online at

www.headspace.org.au

Kids Helpline - Call 1800 55 1800 or

kidshelpline.com.au

ReachOut - Online at reachout.com.au

SANE Australia - Call 1800 187 263 or online at sane.org

Specialist areas

1800Respect - confidential counselling, information and support for people impacted by sexual assault, domestic or family violence and abuse via phone or online chat. Phone: 1800 737 732 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

[1800Respect online chat](#).

Directline - confidential alcohol and drug counselling and referral service. Phone: 1800 888 236 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). [Directline online counselling](#).

Switchboard Victoria - telephone and web counselling, information, and referral service for LGBTQI people. Phone: 1800 184 527 (3pm - 12am, 7 days a week). [QLife Webchat](#).

Ref: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19>

On this page

- [Get the app](#)
- [COVIDSafe help](#)
- [About the app](#)
- [Translated information](#)
- [Resources — COVIDSafe app](#)
- [What COVIDSafe is for](#)
- [How COVIDSafe works](#)

Recipe ideas for Autumn/Winter

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/recipes>