

## Protocols for the control of the spread of COVID-19 (Corona virus)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Older adults over 70 and people who have underlying chronic medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes ARE at higher risk for developing serious complications and death from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your doctor about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

At the present time:

- there is currently **no vaccine** to prevent coronavirus disease (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within 1.5 metres).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses or eyes of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Surfaces can become contaminated by touch or by the droplets, and the virus can last on them for a number of days, infecting people who come into contact with them.

**If you are meeting in a gathering of people, the following will help reduce the risk, though it will not remove it completely. All possible attendees should be advised of the following:**

- **If you are unwell**, have cold or flu-like symptoms, please do not attend.
- If you have a **family member who is unwell**, has cold or flu-like symptoms, please do not attend.
- If you have recently **returned from a high-risk region**, or been near someone diagnosed with COVID-19, do not attend.
- Before joining the group, **please wash your hands** for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or **use an alcohol-based sanitiser** on your hands of at least 60% alcohol. You should repeat this if you cough or sneeze or blow your nose.
- **Avoid close personal contact** with another person, such as shaking hands, hugging or kissing.
- **Avoid touching any part of your face.** Sneeze or cough into your elbow or a tissue, not your hands. Bin the tissue immediately.

- **Put distance between yourself and other people** of 1.5 metres. Social distancing is especially important for people who are at higher risk of infection.
- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces after any gathering.** This includes tables, arm rests, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, taps, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them first:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Wash in a dishwasher all used cutlery, mugs, cups and plates** after any gathering. Only a dishwasher is hot enough to kill the virus.
- **If you are volunteering in a food distribution centre, wear a mask.** They protect you from droplets emitted if someone infected coughs or sneezes near you. Masks should be commercially made, well-fitted and replaced after one to two hours. P2 masks give the best protection, but surgical masks will give decent protection as well.
- **If you are volunteering in a food distribution centre, wear gloves.** The virus can easily be transmitted via surfaces. Gloves protect you from coming into direct contact with contaminated surfaces. They also assist in deterring people from touching their faces. They should be discarded after use.

**You can kill the virus on surfaces by using:**

- **Dilute household bleach.**  
To make a bleach solution, mix:
  - 4 teaspoons bleach per litre of water
- **Alcohol solutions.**  
Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.

This information has been compiled from the NSW State Government Health Dept website (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/controlguideline/Pages/novel-coronavirus.aspx>) and the World Health Organisation website on preventing COVID-19 (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/infection-prevention-and-control>).