

Update on increase in COVID-19 cases

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Issued by: Dr Clare Looker, Chief Health Officer

Issued to: Health services, health professionals and the Victorian community

Key messages

- Community transmission of COVID-19 is increasing across Victoria.
 - Recent weeks have seen a rapid increase in hospitalisation of COVID-19 cases.
 - This increase in community transmission is linked to a new variant, JN.1 which is causing similar impacts internationally. During this time, it is especially important that those at greatest risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 are protected against catching COVID-19 – this includes people aged 65 and above, people with a disability or chronic medical condition and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
 - These six steps can help you stay ahead of COVID-19:
1. **Wear a mask:** a high-quality and well-fitted mask can protect you and others from the virus.
 2. **Get vaccinated:** stay up to date with your COVID-19 vaccine. There are new monovalent vaccines available that are highly effective at preventing severe disease. You should get a booster if you are over 75 and haven't had one for 6 months. Other groups are also recommended to get a booster. Vaccines are available at your GP or local pharmacy.
 3. **Let fresh air in:** open windows and doors when you can – it reduces the spread of the virus. Meet outside when possible.
 4. **Get tested:** if you have symptoms, take a rapid antigen test. If you test positive and are eligible for antivirals, take them as soon as possible.
 5. **Stay at home:** if you have COVID-19, you should stay at home for at least five days and until you have no symptoms. Speak to your GP if symptoms worsen.
 6. **Take antivirals if eligible:** if you are at risk of falling very sick, you may be eligible for COVID-19 antiviral medicines. You must take these within 5 days of developing symptoms - the sooner the better. See your GP for more information.
- The Department of Health will continue to monitor surveillance indicators and keep the public informed of when COVID-19 transmission returns to a low level of activity.
7. Read the full alert: [Update on increase in COVID-19 cases](#)