



## **BrainLink Coronavirus (COVID-19) PLAN**

BrainLink acknowledges that this is a very difficult and potentially frightening time for everyone, especially the elderly and those with underlying health concerns. BrainLink staff will be doing their best to support all clients during this time.

At this point in time we have made the difficult decision to cancel all carer activities and home visits. Our aim is to try and minimise the potential risk of passing on any infection and to keep our staff well. Our staff will be available to talk to you over the phone or via email.

BrainLink recognises that some people are more vulnerable than others and during this period we will be focusing our support on people who:

- Live alone in the community.
- Are the only person living with some-one they are caring for.
- Have limited extended support from family or friends.
- Have very complex support needs.

However even if you don't fall into this category and need assistance please don't hesitate to ring your support coordinator (for NDIS participants) or ring or email BrainLink.

The Victorian Government has a set of guidelines to help you minimise the risk of contracting COVID-19 and what to do if you think you may be infected.

Things are changing on a regular basis and for the most current information please refer to:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

## **VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES**

### **What is coronavirus?**

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

The most recently discovered coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness.

### **Who is at risk?**

We are still learning about this new virus. Early indications are that people over 65 and people with pre-existing medical conditions such as heart and lung disease are more at risk of experiencing severe symptoms

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Many people will suffer only mild symptoms those most at risk may experience severe symptoms. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Breathing difficulties such as breathlessness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Fatigue or tiredness.

### **How does COVID-19 spread?**

COVID-19 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 do I reduce my risk of contracting COVID-19?**

- 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 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). This won't protect you from COVID-19, but it will reduce your risk of getting the flu.

## Residential aged care services

The Australian Government has identified a number of high risk countries.

If people have travelled to any of the at risk countries in the last 14 days, they should not visit family and friends living aged care services. A current list of at risk countries available here:

[www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm](http://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/ohp-covid-19-countries.htm)

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Please note that information about the Coronavirus is evolving and changing daily.

Refer daily for most recent update to:

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>