

Local Government Victoria Bulletin

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COVID-19 ADVICE FOR VICTORIANS TO STAY WELL IN WINTER

The Victorian Government is providing Victorians with more advice on how they can protect themselves and their families this winter, with enhanced communications, community engagement and outreach, and support for business to keep customers and workers safe and their doors open.

The Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants, which are now dominant along the east coast of Australia, are expected to continue to cause increases in new cases, reinfections, and hospital admissions – with a 53 per cent increase in the number of Victorians in hospital with COVID-19 over the last two weeks.

There is also an increase in respiratory illnesses like cold and flu which, along with COVID-19, are putting additional pressure on hospitals and healthcare workers across the country.

In recognition of this next phase of the pandemic and as part of the plan to protect the healthcare system, **sensible changes to pandemic orders and public health recommendations will come into place at 11:59pm tonight**, to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure Victorians are aware of proactive steps they can take to look after themselves and each other.

- In line with AHPPC advice, the period when someone is considered a recently confirmed case (and therefore exempt from testing and isolation/quarantine requirements) has been revised to **four weeks**, down from 12 weeks. This reflects the emerging evidence that new variants of COVID-19 can evade prior immunity gained from infection.
- Positive cases are still required to **isolate for seven days from the day they took their test** but an additional reason to leave home has been added – **to provide transport for a household member to obtain food, if essential**. The infected person will need to remain in the car and wear a face covering at all times.
- A significant new investment will **boost public health messaging** and engagement efforts with the community to encourage third and fourth COVID-19 vaccination doses, flu vaccination, the benefits of wearing a mask and maximizing ventilation indoors. The **Stay Well in Winter** campaign will run across TV, radio, outdoor and digital channels. This investment will support community leaders and business to encourage the uptake of sensible, preventative actions to keep well this winter.
- The Government is also announcing **another round of its Small Business Ventilation Grant Program** to help businesses invest in equipment that will keep their workers and customers safe in indoor settings.
- **Mask wearing in indoor and crowded settings is strongly recommended** to protect yourself and the most vulnerable Victorians through winter – but there **will not be any changes** to current face mask requirements with these new pandemic orders.

- The Minister for Health is also requesting that **employers consider working from home arrangements** that are most appropriate for their workplace and employees based on individual requirements.

The Government is investing billions to support the health system and healthcare workers during this difficult time, but it's more important than ever that **Victorians take sensible and meaningful measures to protect themselves, loved ones and the health system.**

All Victorians are encouraged to make sure they are up to date with vaccinations, wear a good quality face mask, try to maintain good ventilation indoors and get a test if feeling unwell with COVID-19 symptoms.

Changes made under the Occupational Health and Safety Amendment (COVID-19 Vaccination Information) Regulations 2022 allow employers to collect vaccination information of workers if they choose to have vaccination requirements to keep their workplaces COVIDSafe. These updated regulations take effect today to help employers decide on what measures are most appropriate to keep their workplaces and workforce as safe as possible from COVID-19.

For more information about these changes, visit [WorkSafe](#).

For more information about how to fight COVID-19 and stay well this winter visit coronavirus.vic.gov.au.