

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – getting tested when you do not have symptoms (asymptomatic testing)

What you need to know

You are a healthcare worker and you have volunteered to be tested for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) without having symptoms of the disease. You do not need to isolate while you wait for your results and can to work and go about your usual activities. Please read this information carefully.

What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

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 mild to severe respiratory illness in humans. An outbreak of COVID-19 has spread around the world and has been characterised as a pandemic.

Why are you being tested even though you don't have symptoms of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

The department is rolling out an enhanced screening program to better understand how the virus is spreading in the community and set us up for the potential easing of restrictions.

The more tests that are done, the more data the department has about the prevalence of coronavirus in our community.

Most people who have COVID-19 have symptoms such as cough, fever or sore throat. In many cases these symptoms can be mild.

There is a small chance that you have COVID-19 even though you feel well and don't have any symptoms of the disease. This is known as an asymptomatic case of COVID-19.

It is possible that people without symptoms (asymptomatic cases) pass on COVID-19 to other people without knowing it.

Who is being asked to volunteer to be tested?

Initially, healthcare workers and aged care workers are being asked to volunteer to be tested.

The reason for this is that healthcare workers have a higher chance of catching COVID-19 due to their exposure to patients and are at higher risk of passing COVID-19 onto sick patients and vulnerable people.

What do I need to do?

Your employer will provide information on where you should go to seek testing.

You will be asked to provide some contact details and answer some brief questions about any current symptoms you have. This is so we can contact you in the event of a positive result (see below) and so we understand how the virus is showing itself in the community.

What will happen to my personal information and test results?

The data you provide and your test result will be stored securely by the department and used for public health management and to inform the response to COVID-19 in Victoria. In the future, deidentified information could be used for research.

What should I do while I am waiting for the test results?

It may take a few days for the test results to be returned to you.

You do not need to isolate while you wait for your results and can go to work and go about your usual activities.

Who will provide my results?

The doctor or healthcare facility that has arranged your test is responsible for providing you with your results.

What happens if my test is negative?

If your tests are negative, you can continue to work and go about your usual activities. However, if you develop symptoms of COVID-19 in the future, you must isolate and not go to work and you may need to be tested again.

What happens if my test is positive?

Both your doctor and a Public Health Officer will contact you to find out more information from you and provide you with further information. After a discussion, a specialist may be involved to further assess your situation. You must remain in your home or accommodation until a Public Health Officer has conducted an assessment that you are no longer infectious and you are advised it is safe to return to normal activities.

Healthcare workers who test positive for coronavirus must return 2 negative swabs, at least 24 hours apart before being allowed to return to work.

If your condition deteriorates, seek medical attention:

- Notify the department or Public Health Officer managing your care by calling the number provided to you.
- Follow the direction of the Public Health Officer who may advise you to go to a doctor or a hospital, and will agree with you how you should get there.
- Call ahead to the doctor or hospital and inform them that you are a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.
- If you need to leave your home or accommodation to seek medical attention, put on a mask if you have one.
- When you arrive at the doctor's surgery or hospital, tell them that you are a confirmed case of novel coronavirus.

If you are experiencing severe symptoms, such as shortness of breath:

- Call 000 and request an ambulance
- Inform the ambulance officers that you have novel coronavirus.

People who you have had close contact with, including family members and people you live with, will need to isolate themselves for 14 days since their last contact with you.

What happens if my result is borderline positive?

There is a very small chance that your test result will not be clearly positive or negative. These results are considered “indeterminate”. If your test is indeterminate, you will be considered a positive case and treated as outlined above, until we can determine whether your test is truly negative or positive.

Where can I find out more information?

Call the Department of Health and Human Services on to discuss any questions you have. If you need a translator first call 131 450, then request the hotline on 1300 651 160.

For Victorian updates to the current incident, go to: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

For national updates: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

For international updates: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus>

WHO resources <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>

To receive this publication in an accessible format phone 1300 651 160, using the National Relay Service 131 450 if required, or email [Public Health branch](mailto:public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au) <public.health@dhhs.vic.gov.au>.

Authorised and published by the Victorian Government, 1 Treasury Place, Melbourne.

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