

Monday 23 August 2021

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Update 51

Vaccination blitz for aged care nurses and personal care workers and stay informed about the latest COVID-19 vaccine information

Victorian COVID-19 cases: on 23 August there are 494 active COVID-19 cases. Of the 71 new cases announced today 49 are linked to known outbreaks and 22 are under investigation. Data links at the end of this newsflash.

Restrictions blitz for residential aged care staff – 23 to 29 August

All private and public aged care staff have priority access at state vaccination centres from Monday 23 August (today) to Sunday 29 August 2021 inclusive.

The Victorian Government blitz has been organised to assist nurses and personal care workers meet the Federal Government deadline requiring all residential aged care workers to have their first vaccine dose by 17 September.

Victoria's Chief Health Officer has not yet released the directions which will give legal effect to the vaccine requirement of aged care staff. The directions are imminent.

Nurses and personal care workers also have access to the Pfizer vaccine regardless of age.

Many state vaccination centres have walk-ins available for aged care staff, but bookings are preferred. For information on centres accepting walk-ins visit www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-centres

You will need to show your workplace ID badge or a signed declaration form (<https://bit.ly/2SOShKe>) to show you work in aged care.

ANMF supports vaccination and strongly encourages our members to have the COVID-19 vaccination if possible.

To book an appointment call 1800 675 398 or go online <https://portal.cvms.vic.gov.au/>

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ANMF (Vic Branch) 'I'm vaccinated' Facebook frame

ANMF members are trusted health professionals. If you are fully vaccinated download our new nurses, midwives and carers Facebook frame and tell the rest of Victoria. <https://bit.ly/3D00IF1>

Federal Government releases aged care staff vaccination data map

The Federal Government has released an interactive map showing data of vaccination rates of staff at all residential aged care facilities.

The vaccination rate of Victorian public and private aged care nurses and personal care workers is higher than the national rate. Federal Government data indicated last week that 71 per cent of Victorian aged care workers had received a first dose. Of these 49 per cent were fully vaccinated. Our July survey of more than 16,000 Victorian private aged care members – nurses and personal care workers - indicated almost 80 per cent have received their first dose and almost 56 per cent have had both.

Nationally, at 22 August, of the total 278,214 residential aged care workers reported to date by providers, 189,541 have received a first dose COVID-19 vaccine (68 per cent) and 130,405 are fully vaccinated (47 per cent).

The map indicates by region most facilities are well on their way to staff achieving the required vaccination by 17 September. It will also assist employers and governments understand where there are access barriers and where they need to focus vaccination resources.

The Victorian and Federal governments are improving access to vaccination to help nurses and carers receive their required first dose by the 17 September deadline.

Find your workplace on the map via <https://bit.ly/3y8H3iL>

Additional vaccination leave for public sector nurses and midwives

On 21 August, the Victorian Government announced public sector nurses and midwives could access half a day's paid leave to attend a COVID-19 vaccination appointment. The leave is in addition to your personal leave. Further detail is available in the 'Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters' see link below.

For some months now, public sector nurses and midwives have also had access to special paid leave in the event you experience symptoms after receiving your first or second dose of the vaccine that prevent you from attending work. You are entitled to claim up to four days (in total) for receiving both doses. The public sector enterprise agreement personal leave evidence requirements apply.

Victorian Government media release 'Helping public sector workers get the jab, sooner' <https://bit.ly/3sCmzh0>

Victorian Department of Health employment advice - updated

The Victorian Department of Health's 'Coronavirus Guidance Note on Employment-Related Matters' – provides advice on leave, including special paid leave and vaccination leave (page 5 and 6), reimbursement for significant travel expenses to attend a vaccination appointment (page 5), casuals (page 8) and higher risk staff and re-deployment (page 7). ANMF encourages all employers to follow this guidance, however, recognise that enforcement is limited to public sector employers only. The guidance, last updated 22 August 2021, can be read via <https://bit.ly/2UhDSU2>

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Restrictions extended to regional Victoria

On 21 August 2021, the Chief Health Officer extended metropolitan Melbourne's restrictions, except for the 9pm - 5am curfew, to regional Victoria.

Current restrictions <https://bit.ly/3gNFIOG>

Table of current restrictions <https://bit.ly/3sG8DCE>

Victorian Government media release 'Lockdown across regional Victoria to keep us safe' <https://bit.ly/3moK2Bp>

Childcare restricted to children of authorised workers

The Victorian Government has announced that from 11.59pm, Monday 23 August early childcare and education services will only be available to the children of authorised workers and vulnerable children.

Only one parent needs to be an authorised worker for families to be able to access care.

Details <https://bit.ly/2XITvJr>

Priority Pfizer vaccination appointments for nurses, midwives and carers

ANMF continues to strongly encourage all nurses, midwives and aged care personal care workers to get vaccinated.

We are eagerly awaiting the release of the Chief Health Officer Directives which we expect will require those working in both public and private aged care to have a dose of the vaccine prior to 17 September.

Regardless of age nurses, midwives and carers are eligible to receive the Pfizer vaccine at a Victorian Government vaccine hub. Use the phone number or online appointment link below to access the Pfizer priority appointments.

How to book a priority group COVID-19 vaccine appointment

Read the information about the booking process and the vaccines on the Victorian Government website <https://bit.ly/3dZjuC6> then

1. **Make an online booking** via the Victorian Government's website - the booking system allows you to access appointments as part of a priority group. <https://portal.cvms.vic.gov.au/>
or
2. **Call the Victorian Government Coronavirus Hotline** on **1800 675 398** and tell the hotline operator you are part of the health care worker or aged care worker priority group.

Keep yourself informed about the vaccines

Keep yourself informed about the latest accurate COVID-19 vaccine information as well as the latest on the roll out with these links:

1. Victorian Department of Health **COVID-19 Vaccines: your questions answered: webinar for healthcare workers - part 1** (10 June) <https://bit.ly/3fBbelQ> **part 2** (17 August) via <https://bit.ly/3D9LFJg>
2. Federal Government information about the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine <https://bit.ly/3eAGztR>
3. Federal Government information about the Pfizer vaccine <https://bit.ly/32Vry0w>

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4. What happens after I am vaccinated? <https://bit.ly/3hTYI9u>
5. Australian Academy of Science – COVID-19 facts hub <https://bit.ly/3hXgl2C>
6. Therapeutic Goods Administration - <https://bit.ly/3uli9up>
7. World Health Organisation – vaccines explained <https://bit.ly/3vr6jjQ>
8. National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance <https://bit.ly/2QT6nK7>
9. Australian Government translated information about COVID-19 vaccines <https://bit.ly/3qRfEyc>
10. *On the Record* – COVID-19 vaccination FAQs answered <https://bit.ly/3ekLike>

Exposure sites

Check this page regularly <https://bit.ly/35YOUnv>

Tier 1 – get tested immediately and quarantine for 14 days from exposure. You should also contact the Department of Health on 1300 651 160.

Tier 2 – get tested urgently and isolate until you have a negative result. Continue to monitor for symptoms, get tested again if symptoms appear.

Tier 3 – monitor for symptoms, if symptoms develop, immediately get tested and isolate until you receive a negative result.

Do you live with a close contact?

If you have a close contact living in your household, you are a secondary contact and must quarantine until they are told they can leave quarantine. You cannot go to work and you may be eligible for special paid leave from your employer or see below for further payment information. The Victorian Department of Health's coronavirus website has more information via <https://bit.ly/2TqAQ3t>

Where can I get tested for COVID-19?

Please get tested even with the slightest of symptoms. Testing site information <https://bit.ly/2TB9eZ9>

P2/N95 mask fit testing

ANMF encourages all nurses, midwives and personal care workers to participate in their workplace fit testing program as a matter of urgency to ensure you, your family and your patients, clients and residents are protected.

Irrespective of fit testing, fit checking should be undertaken every time someone puts a P2/N95 respirator on. Read the WorkSafe Victoria advice via <https://bit.ly/3ddwqRT>

Personal protective equipment concern?

Members with concerns about PPE should:

1. **raise and submit OHS incident reports with your employer** as well as speaking directly with your manager
2. **involve your Health and Safety Rep** if you have one

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3. contact ANMF via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> (include your report and response if applicable) for further support and advice if after you have raised your concerns they are not addressed by your employer.

How to access ANMF support

Members are encouraged complete an online Member Assistance inquiry form via <https://anmfvic.asn.au/memberassistance> (scroll to the bottom of the page).

The Branch triages member inquiries meaning Member Assistance can respond to **urgent matters, such as a formal AHPRA notification, a disciplinarys, meetings and bullying**, and escalate to the relevant ANMF Organiser or other appropriate staff without members waiting on the phone for extended periods.

We respond to urgent queries within one business day, and non-urgent queries within three business days.

Please note ANMF Member Assistance is transitioning to a new case management system and there may be some unexpected delays, but all urgent inquiries will receive a response within one business day.

\$450 test and isolation payment

The Victorian Government provides a \$450 test and isolation payment to workers required to isolate after taking a COVID-19 test who don't have access to paid leave. This is for private aged care workers too. More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3fWygqQ>

\$1500 disaster leave payment

The Federal Government provides a \$1500 disaster leave payment if you tested positive or were identified as a close contact and have to isolate for 14 days. Private aged care workers are eligible for the payment if you do not have access to paid leave during your isolation period. Call 180 22 66 to make a claim. More information, eligibility, and applications <https://bit.ly/3bWnfXG>

Emergency accommodation for healthcare workers

The Victorian Government provides the 'frontline accommodation program' for health care workers if they need support to quarantine or isolate safely. Private aged care nurses and personal care workers are eligible to access this program. For details <https://bit.ly/2X6cABJ>

COVID-19 stressed? Take the self-care quiz

All nurses, midwives, personal care workers and nursing and midwifery students are encouraged to reflect on their current circumstances and wellbeing and fill out the Nursing and Midwifery Health Program Victoria's self-care plan questionnaire via <https://bit.ly/343qHLf>. You will be emailed a self-care plan. To contact NMHPV call 9415 7551 or email admin@nmhp.org.au Find out more <https://www.nmhp.org.au>

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COVID-19 important links for nurses, midwives and personal care workers

ANMF continues to collate the important links all in one place, so you don't have to go looking. Please bookmark and check this page regularly – <https://anmfvic.asn.au/COVID-19>

Latest COVID-19 statistics

Victorian COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3j5vJwC> (494 active cases in Victoria)

Healthcare Worker COVID-19 data dashboard <https://bit.ly/3jQT5q4>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily update <https://bit.ly/34Et8Ug>

Victorian Chief Health Officer daily media release <https://bit.ly/2EDiQLb>

Victorian Government's vaccination data dashboard <https://bit.ly/319HzPq>

Federal Government national COVID-19 data <https://bit.ly/3spz67E>

Federal Government's national and aged care vaccination data <https://bit.ly/3spRSM5>

As at 21 August 2021: 10, 793, 183 first doses, 6,190,566 Australians fully vaccinated (30% of people over 16 years)

In Victoria: 4,385,028 doses have been administered (state and federal programs combined).

Don't bring it home: guide to minimise the risk of infection

The ANMF (Vic Branch) 'Don't bring it home' guide is designed to assist members returning home from work after a shift.

Job Reps and HSRs are encouraged to print the poster which is part of this PDF newsflash. You can also download the 'Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection' A4 poster via bit.ly/COVID19-DBIH

ANMF Job Reps and Health and Safety Reps are encouraged to display this newsflash on their workplace noticeboard.

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Protocols for entering your home and minimising the risk of infection.

-  **1** On entry, remove your shoes and place in a plastic box.
-  **2** Leave your bag, wallet, mobile, keys, etc in a box near the entry.
-  **3** Change out of your clothes immediately and wash them. Use the hottest possible machine wash setting and dryer if you can.
-  **4** Have a shower.
-  **5** Clean items you've brought in and surfaces you've touched.

Remember to wash your hands regularly.

Cleaning tips

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- Hot soapy wash, wipe or disinfectant spray (depending on surface) phone cases, keys, ID, lanyard, glasses, etc.**

Consider changing in and out of your uniform/scrubs at work.