

## **COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions**

### Information for all YWCA Employees

Please ensure you are viewing the latest version by visiting the [YWCA Australia webpage](#) or the [National Portal](#).

You will be aware that the COVID-19 situation (also known as novel coronavirus) is continuing to evolve. We have prepared these frequently asked questions to ensure we are supporting you, your colleagues, the people we serve and the wider community.

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## 1. COVID-19 virus (also known as Novel Coronavirus)

### 1.1 What is COVID-19

- COVID-19 is a coronavirus. The Australian Government Department of Health states that human coronaviruses generally cause mild illness, such as the common cold. COVID-19 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans. It was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China and has since spread more widely.

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

- The symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat and fatigue. Symptoms can range from very mild to severe. It is important to seek advice and be diagnosed by a medical professional so you can receive proper care as soon as you feel unwell.
- For further information regarding the symptoms and whether you should be tested, please refer to the [Australian Government Department of Health Website](#) or contact the Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**.

### 1.3 What should I do if I am diagnosed with COVID-19?

- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, you will be directed by your medical professional and relevant state health department on the action you need to take. This will include self-isolation for 14 days.
- You should advise your manager at YWCA (who will inform the relevant Director and Health Safety and Wellbeing Advisor (HSW Advisor)) as soon as you are diagnosed to ensure we appropriately support you, and your colleagues and clients who have been in contact with you.
- Once symptoms have passed and you are well, you will need to gain medical clearance prior to returning to work and a medical certificate to support your absence.
- Please be aware that, if you are confirmed as having COVID-19, we will need to share your details with a small number of people and health authorities to determine who has been in close contact with you. We will work to ensure your privacy as much as possible.

### 1.4 What should I do if I have been in contact with someone with COVID-19?

- If your state health department contacts you to confirm that you meet the criteria of having been in close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 we ask that you immediately self-isolate, seek medical advice and monitor your health.
- The Australian Government Department of Health defines **close contact** as someone who has been face to face for at least 15 minutes or been in the same closed space for at least two hours with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 when that person was infectious.
- If you are concerned that you may have been in contact with, or at a location with, a person with confirmed COVID-19, please talk to your manager (who will inform the relevant Director and HSW

Advisor) before going to work and contact your state health department to confirm if you need to self-isolate.

- If you are unwell with any illness, you should always stay at home and seek advice from your medical professional before going to work.

### **1.5 What if there is a person with confirmed COVID-19 or an outbreak at a YWCA service or office?**

- It is important to be aware that being at the same location with a confirmed case might not meet the definition of close contact (outlined in 1.4).
- If you are well and unless you are confirmed as having been in close contact with a person with COVID-19, we ask you to attend work to ensure we continue to provide our highest levels of service. If your role allows it, YWCA Australia encourages working from home during this time (Please refer to 6.1 for further information on working from home).

## **2. Managing your health & wellbeing**

### **2.1 What should I do if I have an underlying health condition? I'm currently well, but I'm concerned about being in my service or office with the increased risk of COVID-19. Can I work from home?**

- If you have an underlying health condition, have a discussion with your manager who will consult with their Director or People and Culture to agree on the options available to you. If you are in a role that allows you to, working from home for a limited period may be one of those options. Refer to point 6.1.

### **2.2 When should I make a decision to be tested for COVID-19 if I feel unwell? It could be hard to tell the difference between this virus and the common cold.**

- Your medical professional can advise if you should be tested for COVID-19. If you are unwell with any illness, we kindly ask that you follow the normal procedures for sick leave including staying at home until you are better and obtaining a medical certificate if required as per our [leave management procedures](#).

### **2.3 What should I do if I have light symptoms, but I feel well enough to work and don't want to take sick leave?**

- There are a number of things that can cause cold or virus symptoms, including allergies. If you are clearly unwell, stay at home and seek advice from your medical professional.

## 2.4 What can I do to help prevent infection?

- It's important to follow simple, but strict hygiene measures particularly around vulnerable people, such as the elderly, infants and chronically ill, including:
  - Washing your hands thoroughly and frequently
  - Staying at home and away from other people if you are feeling unwell
  - Avoiding close contact with other people, such as avoiding shaking hands
  - Coughing or sneezing into tissues or into your elbow
  - Washing your hands after coughing, sneezing or wiping your nose
  - Avoiding touching your face and mouth, especially after touching surfaces.

## 3. Self-isolation

### 3.1 What does self-isolation mean?

- This means you should not attend work or public places and you must remain at home. This includes travelling on public transport, shopping at supermarkets and stores, collecting children from childcare etc. You must isolate yourself away from others until a period of time has passed and you are not considered to be a risk personally from the illness or capable of passing it on to others.
- For further information regarding self-isolation, please refer to the Australian Government Department of Health's guidance sheet by clicking on [this link](#).

### 3.2 When should I self-isolate?

- Based on the Australian Government Department of Health advice, all people who arrive in Australia from midnight 15 March 2020, or think may they have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, are required to self-isolate for 14 days. **This advice is changing regularly. Please check the latest advice.**
- You may also be instructed to self-isolate by your state health department if they let you know that you have been in close contact with a confirmed case.
- If in any doubt about whether to self-isolate, talk to your manager, Director or HSW Advisor before going to work.

### 3.3 Someone I live with is getting tested for COVID-19. Should I self-isolate and get tested as well?

- If a household member is a suspected case, you may need to be isolated. This will be determined by your public health unit on a case-by-case basis. Your public health unit will contact you if you need to isolate and may be required to get tested.

## 4. Managing our workplace

### 4.1 Can face to face meetings still go ahead?

- Where possible meetings are to take place via phone or video. Where meetings are required to be face to face, maintain a 1.5 metre distance.

### 4.2 What is YWCA's policy on international and domestic work-related travel?

- YWCA Australia has elected to discontinue any domestic and international travel until further notice.

### 4.3 What if someone in a YWCA service (employee, volunteer, resident, client or visitor) is diagnosed with COVID-19? Will you close the service?

- If someone is diagnosed with COVID-19 in a YWCA service, we will follow the directions of the state health department and advise you of the details and instructions to follow.

### 4.4 Will you close the office if someone in a YWCA location is diagnosed with COVID-19?

- If someone is diagnosed with COVID-19 in a YWCA office, the HSW Advisor with relevant parties will conduct a risk assessment based on factors such as where that person was sitting, meetings attended and movement around the building. On the advice of the relevant state health department, we will let people in the office know what actions they need to take as soon as possible.

### 4.5 Will you stop people from visiting services while there is the potential for a COVID-19 outbreak?

- We are currently asking visitors to our services to follow the same guidelines as our employees. This includes being vigilant with hand hygiene, not attending the service if they are unwell and self-isolating for 14 days if they have recently travelled overseas.

### 4.6 Who should I notify if I'm diagnosed with COVID-19 or someone in my service/office is?

- You should notify your manager who will notify the relevant Director, as well as the HSW Advisor.

#### **4.7 What should I do if I'm concerned that a colleague/client/visitor is unwell, and they are still at work and not following hygiene measures?**

- If you have any concerns, let your manager know who can talk to the person involved, or their manager. The person may have symptoms that are not related to a virus or infectious disease, such as allergies or asthma.

#### **4.8 What should I do if I'm concerned that a colleague/client/visitor is being treated differently due to their nationality because of a perception they have travelled from an affected country?**

- Please talk to your manager and/or People and Culture Team if you, or any of our employees, the people we serve, or the many partners we work with are experiencing discrimination. YWCA does not tolerate racism.

#### **4.9 Will you be providing extra cleaning at this time?**

- Our current cleaning protocols are already at a high standard to control and prevent infection. Please also consider good surface hygiene at your desk which includes keeping it tidy and free of clutter. In certain parts of our business (Song, Housing) we have implemented additional increased cleaning protocols.

#### **4.10 Where can we order supplies of face masks and hand sanitiser?**

- Please follow your normal processes for ordering these goods. We are aware that there are supply issues across Australia and we are working with our suppliers and will provide updates when available. If you have significant concerns, please discuss with your Director.

#### **4.11 What should I do if I'm approached by the media to make a comment about YWCA or speculation about COVID-19 at my service?**

- In line with our [Media Policy](#), please refer any media queries to the Communications Team through [caroline.hamilton@ywca.org.au](mailto:caroline.hamilton@ywca.org.au) or [amanda.chan@ywca.org.au](mailto:amanda.chan@ywca.org.au)
- We know that speculation and misinformation can cause unnecessary concern, and we ask you not to speculate with clients, friends or family about this situation or any others related to your working at YWCA. This includes not sharing information on social media. For more information, please view our [Social Media Policy](#).

## 5. Personal travel advice

### 5.1 Where can I get up to date travel advice?

- As of 20 March 2020 only Australian citizens, residents and immediate family members can travel to Australia.
- As of 25 March 2020 all international travel from Australia has been banned, other than for essential or compassionate grounds.
- Many Australian states and territories are closing their borders for any non-essential domestic travel.
- Anyone travelling interstate or returning from overseas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Travel advice is changing often so please visit [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) or [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

### 5.2 Who do I need to talk to if I've travelled overseas?

- If you have recently travelled overseas or interstate, please let your manager know as you will need to self-isolate on your return.
- You will also need to get advice from a medical professional as to how long your self-isolation will last and inform your manager (who will inform the relevant Director and HSW Advisor) of your intended absence.
- Any return to work will need to be supported by a medical certificate. Information on how long you need to self-isolate may change in line with government advice.

### 5.3 What if I need to travel to be with family?

- YWCA Australia are asking people to follow Australian Government Department of Health travel advice. However, we understand that personal circumstances may require employees to travel to be with family during this time. Please refer to the Special Paid Leave Policy under 6.1 and talk to your Director and People & Culture team about the options available to you based on your individual circumstances.

## 6. Accessing Appropriate Leave

### 6.1 What are my options around flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements during this time?

- Please refer to [the COVID-19 Special Leave Policy](#) which has been developed to outline the flexible working arrangements and leave entitlements available to staff dependant on a number of scenarios.

## 7. Additional support

- People may become concerned about the impact this situation may have on them, their families, their friends, and their country. Our Employee Assistance Provider, Lifeworks, have put together [a tip sheet](#) in managing the psychological impact that the stress and uncertainty may cause.
- You can also access free and confidential counselling through Lifeworks by calling **1300 361 008**. **Lifeworks have expanded their capability to offer telephone and video counselling.**

## 8. More information

- YWCA Australia has created this frequently asked questions document for COVID-19 and created a secure site for all staff to access any updates. Please be aware that the FAQ document will be updated regularly. If you download it, you need to ensure you are viewing the latest version.
- Please also refer to the following global, national and local health authorities:
  - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
  - <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>
  - <https://health.act.gov.au/>
  - <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/>
  - <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/>
  - <https://health.nt.gov.au/>
  - <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/>
  - <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/>
  - <https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/>
  - <https://www2.health.wa.gov.au/>
- If you have a question, please speak with your manager in the first instance. The HSW Advisor is also available to support you on 0424 969 775 or [safety@ywca.org.au](mailto:safety@ywca.org.au)

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