



West Wimmera Health Service

Community Update No. 2 COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

We wish to inform the community about action we are taking in an endeavour to protect our patients, residents, clients, staff, volunteers, contractors and the wider community from contracting the Coronavirus.

We will be providing this information separately to our Karen community.

We do not believe people should be alarmed and no-one should panic but we do think that the community should be well informed about what some are saying is a one in 100 year global health issue.

There are as yet no known instances of the Coronavirus in our catchment area however we believe it is only a matter of time until there is.

No, antibiotics do not work against viruses, only bacteria.

The new coronavirus (2019-nCoV) is a virus and, therefore, antibiotics should not be used as a means of prevention or treatment.

However, if you are hospitalized for the 2019-nCoV, you may receive antibiotics since bacterial co-infection is possible.



#Coronavirus

Are antibiotics effective in preventing and treating the new coronavirus?



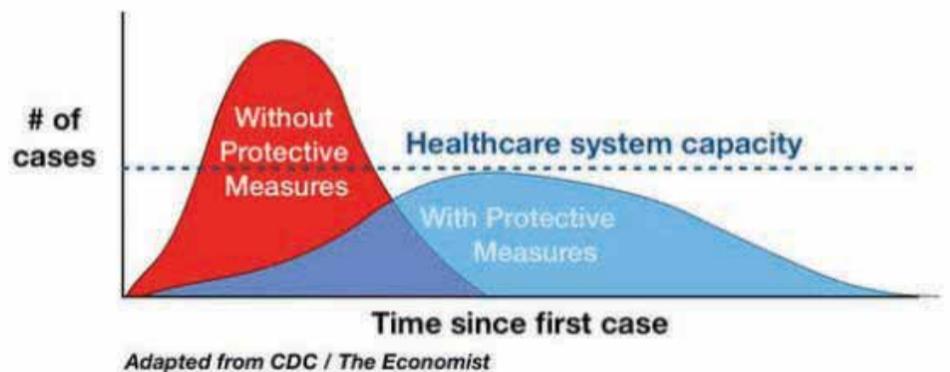
Therefore, we have decided to take the most conservative approach possible to prevent it spreading as much as we reasonably can.

As the Coronavirus spreads primarily through human contact and interaction, and is known to be particularly dangerous if contracted by older people, we believe that it is better to err on the side of caution and act now while we have relatively more time and resources than might be the case later.

Prevention is better than cure. If we as a community can delay the spread of Coronavirus then if and when someone might require intensive care to recover from it, there is much more likely to be available the healthcare professionals, hospital bed and appropriate medical equipment (i.e. ventilators / breathing machines) to use in their care.

You may have heard the term ‘flattening the curve’. The chart below shows how important this is as by adopting protective measures such as social distancing we are giving our healthcare system more time to prepare for the inevitable increase in the patients it will be asked to treat.

Flattening the curve also means that in the meantime, a treatment and/or vaccine might be developed to help further reduce demand on our hospitals.



Accordingly, all of our residential aged care facilities and hospitals are now in full **lockdown** mode until further notice.

This means that:

- Patients and Residents will now stay in the facility except for urgent medical reasons or in any emergency situation that requires them to leave.
- Only staff involved in the care, management and administration associated with direct resident care will be permitted access to our aged care facilities.
- No visitors of any type will be permitted access unless there is an urgent and essential need to do so. By essential we mean that it cannot wait until later and that it is required in order to maintain the safe and effective care and management of our residents or staff.
- The staff responsible for activity and recreation will offer a wider range of activities and assist residents to continue to be able to regularly make contact with relatives and friends by telephone and social platforms (i.e. Facebook, Zoom).



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We have also suspended all non-essential services until further notice. By non-essential services we mean services that can be delayed until later without immediately affecting the health and safety of those we care for and our staff. Such services include elective surgery, allied health visits, and social support (day centre) groups.

Our Community Health Centres at Nhill (Mira building), Minyip, Murtoa and Goroke are also locked down and only people with appointments for essential services or medical appointments (Murtoa and Goroke) will be admitted. Those with appointments will need to knock or ring the door bell and answer a set of screening questions.

Some services currently provided at the centres will be delivered in the home by community and district nursing staff – for example, essential blood tests.

We have significantly increased our use of telehealth / working remotely wherever we can and we are monitoring by telephone the welfare of our more vulnerable clients.

We implore people to follow the latest government directives on social distancing and social gatherings which are located on the internet at:

<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/update-coronavirus-measures-220320>; and

<https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-stage-1>

Finally, please take care of yourselves and those around you and keep up to date with the latest expert advice at:

If you have any queries in relation to this update please do not hesitate to contact our Chief Executive Officer, Ritchie Dodds, on 5391 4218.



If you are asked to be in quarantine at home or in another location

During times of stress, pay attention to your own needs and feelings. Engage in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing. Exercise regularly, keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy food. Keep things in perspective.

#Coronavirus #COVID19

 World Health Organization

Myths & Facts

Myth: Coronavirus is just like the flu.

Fact: Coronavirus is estimated to be up to around 10 times more deadly than the flu and more so for older people or people of any age with pre-existing medical conditions.

Myth: We're a long way from the city so we should be okay.

Fact: Coronavirus appears to be highly contagious which means it spreads easily from person to person. If no preventative action is taken then some experts believe up to 60% of Australians could contract it.

Myth: This will all blow over as quickly as it came

Fact: If the virus becomes widespread it could last in the community for many more months than if it is well-contained early on.

Myth: We should just wait until someone gets the virus in our community and worry about it then

Fact: Prevention is better than cure. Apart from the avoidance of illness, the fewer people that the Australian health system will need to care for in coming weeks and months the better.

Myth: Coronavirus doesn't affect children much.

Fact: Some are saying it's true that children with the virus don't seem to suffer as much as older people. However, if children contract Coronavirus it is considered likely they can still spread it to others.

Protect yourself and your family

Wash your hands regularly



1

Wet your hands.

Put soap on your hands.

2



3

Rub the soap over all parts of your hands for at least 20 seconds.



Rinse your hands under running water.

4



5

Dry your hands thoroughly with disposable paper towel or hand dryer.



Stay germ free and healthy



Reduce your risk of coronavirus

- **WASH** your 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.
- **STAY** at home if you feel sick. If you take medication make sure you have enough.
- **PHONE** your doctor or the hotline – **1800 675 398** – if you need medical attention. They will tell you what to do.
- **CONTINUE** healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep.
- **WEARING** a face mask is not necessary if you are well.
- **BUY** an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60% alcohol.



Find out more

www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

If you are concerned, call the

Coronavirus hotline 1800 675 398 (24 hours)

Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only