

Coronavirus – What’s Happening?

There’s a lot of information going on about coronavirus – what’s true and what isn’t?

How Many Australians have Coronavirus?

- We don’t have accurate figures for the number of Australians with coronavirus. The figures which are publicised are actually 5 days out of date due to the lag in getting samples tested. On top of that, there are many people who have no symptoms or seem to have a cold but actually have coronavirus. The fact is, there are many more people with coronavirus than we actually know about.

Is it True Children Can’t get Coronavirus?

- No – children can catch coronavirus but many children don’t show any symptoms. CT scans have actually shown that many asymptomatic children actually have double pneumonia plus a high virus load – meaning they are spreading the infection.

Is it True You are More Likely to Die of Coronavirus if You are Over 65 Years?

- There are a number of things that contribute to the severity of the virus including existing medical conditions and the strength of your immune system. Older people, particularly over the age of 75 years, tend to have weaker immune systems plus a number of existing medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, lung disease or other chronic conditions. This means they tend to have more severe coronavirus infections and higher death rates.
- In Italy, as hospitals became overcrowded they had to choose who to treat. People over the age of 65 years were generally sent home to free up beds for younger people. This may occur here if we have a rapid rise in severe infections and hospitals don’t have enough beds.

How Far Should We Distance Ourselves From Others?

- The current guideline is staying 1.5 meters from other people.

Does Washing Your Hands Really Help?

- Yes – washing your hands for a minimum of 25 seconds is essential – whenever you have been in public, touched another person, been to the supermarket, touched a parking meter or lift button, before you prepare food and before you eat. When you wash your hands rub them – the rubbing breaks the capsule of the virus and inactivates it.

Should You Go to See Elderly Family or Friends?

- Yes – but go soon. Particularly go to see elderly parents or grandparents as it may be the last time you see them for many months.
- Do not take children with you – children may appear asymptomatic but have and be spreading the coronavirus.

Are There Special Precautions for Elderly People?

- Elderly people should prepare to be at home – self isolated – for several months. Help elderly people to arrange to have shopping done – either by a family member or on-line. Discourage all other visitors to elderly people.

Should We be Worried?

- As the number of cases rapidly escalate, it is possible that people will panic. There have been riots in Italy and Spain. Remember: there is enough food for everyone. Be aware of the local situation, avoid large gatherings but stay calm - and wash your hands.

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