Coronavirus: important and useful information for CO.AS.IT.'s clients, staff and volunteers

Italian Assistance Association
CO.AS.IT.

## What is a Coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some strains can cause illnesses similar to the common cold and others can cause more serious diseases, including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). This new Coronavirus originated in the Hubei Province (China) and the disease outbreak has been named COVID-19.
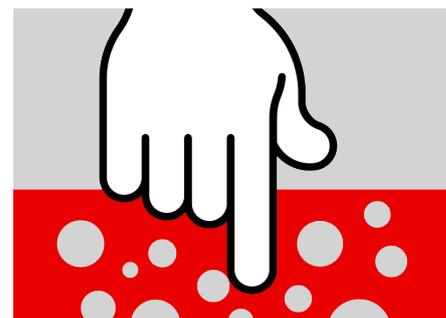
How does this virus spread?

The Coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious
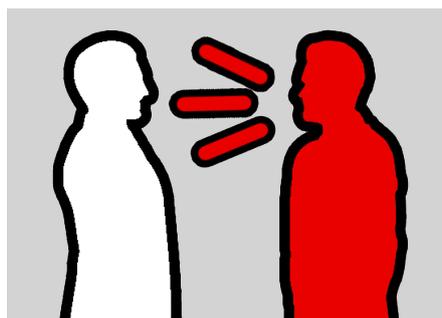
Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes

Touching contaminated objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) and then touching your mouth or face

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms. These can include **fever**, a **cough**, **sore throat**, **tiredness** and **shortness of breath**.

Who is most at risk?

In Australia, the people most at risk of infection are those who have recently travelled overseas and people who have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of Coronavirus. If you have returned from overseas, monitor your health for the next 14 days. From previous experience with other Coronaviruses, categories of people at risk of infection are:

- **People with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)**
- **Elderly people**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people**
- **People with diagnosed chronic medical conditions**
- **Very young children and babies***
- **People in group residential settings**
- **People in detention facilities**

*At this stage the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children relative to the broader population.

How to prevent the spread of Coronavirus?

Everyone is advised to follow the advice of health organisations, especially in relation to hygiene, sanitation and social distancing.
Adopting these few simple measures can make a big difference in preventing the spread of the virus:

Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially before and after handling food, after using public transport, when spending time in public areas and after going to the toilet

Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing using a tissue or, if you don't have one, use your elbow. Promptly dispose of tissues and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser

Avoid physical contact with others (touching, kissing, hugging and other intimate contact). If you have symptoms, use a mask when in company of other people

Avoid social gatherings in excess of 500 people (outdoor) and 100 people (indoor).

If you have recently returned from overseas, you need to monitor your health for the next 14 days. If you are a healthcare worker or a residential aged care worker, you should not attend work for 14 days and inform your employer.

Make yourself familiar with with the 'What you need to know' and 'Isolation guidance' information sheets provided by the Australian Department of Health.

What to do if you suspect to have Coronavirus

If you show symptoms, isolate yourself immediately (even from family members) and seek medical advice.

Make an appointment with your GP. Tell your doctor about your symptoms, travel history and any recent close contact with someone who has Coronavirous.

If you must leave home to see your doctor, wear a surgical mask (if you have one) to protect others.

Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call this number if you are seeking information on Coronavirus, this service operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

1800 020 080

All information provided in this document is correct as of 17/3/2020.