

COVID-19 FACT SHEET #2

Information for Clients

Update Issued: 17 March 2020

Approved by Jo Toohey CEO

This is for The Benevolent Society Clients – not for further distribution

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide advice to Clients about The Benevolent Society's response to the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

What is coronavirus and COVID-19?

Coronaviruses can make humans and animals sick. Some coronaviruses can cause illness 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 is named COVID-19.

How is coronavirus spread?

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

- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious (including before they are showing symptoms)
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes; or
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms. These symptoms can include fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness and shortness of breath. Infections can also be transmitted before someone is showing symptoms, so it is important to practice good infection control and hygiene generally.

Nationally, what actions are being taken to stop the spread?

On 27 February, the Prime Minister activated the Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), which introduced additional measures to slow the importation of the virus into Australia by imposing travel restrictions, as well as ensuring national preparedness for a possible global pandemic. Advice provided in this Bulletin is based on information provided by the Commonwealth and State health authorities.

More detailed advice about protective measures is available from the [World Health Organisation](#).

If you are diagnosed or suspect you may have contracted COVID-19 – notify TBS Staff member immediately. We will work with you to find the most appropriate way we can deliver services to you. Please note that services may be suspended if you or a family member are diagnosed or hospitalised.

If you, or any member of your family or friends, have been identified as a contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19 infection, the local public health unit will contact you with advice. You, or your family member/s, are required to isolate yourself at home for 14 days after contact with the infected person, and to monitor your health and report any symptoms.

Person to person spread of coronaviruses generally occurs between people who are close contacts with one another. A close contact is typically someone who has been face to face for at least 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours, with a person that was infectious.

The public health unit will keep in touch with people who are close contacts of patients with COVID-19 infection. If any symptoms develop, contacts must call the public health unit to report those symptoms.

Do I need to self-isolate if I have returned from an overseas trip?

TBS is following the advice of the Australian Department of Health and State health authorities. In line with this advice, we are enacting the containment initiatives relating to people who have travelled in high risk areas, or who may have come into contact with the virus.

If you have travelled overseas and returned to Australia, you must self-isolate for 14 days. Self-isolation at home means:

- Do not go to public places such as work, school, shopping centres, childcare or university
- Ask someone to get food and other necessities for you and leave them at your front door
- Do not let visitors in – only people who usually live with you should be in your home
- Make sure you stay within one room of the home so as not to infect other family members. More information from health.gov.au

A central register of clients who are required to self-isolate at home will be kept at National Office, accessible to the TBS Crisis Management Team and other key personnel. The register will include the following information:

- Clients name
- Service delivered
- Main TBS Contact
- Commencement date and reason for isolation
- Expected date of return to work.

Who else needs to self-isolate?

Clients who have been in close contact with a **confirmed case** of coronavirus in the last 14 days (must self-isolate for 14 days after the date of last contact with the confirmed case).

Please speak with your TBS contact if you have any concerns or questions relating to this fact sheet.

PH **1800 236 762** or email: customercare@benevolent.org.au