

Winter respiratory illness

Communications toolkit: Older Victorians

June 2026

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Department
of Health

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Purpose of this toolkit

This winter respiratory illness communications toolkit is for healthcare services and community organisations.

The materials and information are designed to be used by healthcare and community organisations to help encourage uptake of winter vaccinations by Victorians and provide infection control resources for settings.

The materials are evergreen and can be used throughout winter.

You can help by:

- **Sharing the materials** from this stakeholder kit with your community via social media and digital platforms
- **Printing and displaying posters** in this pack at your local health service, clinic, community centre, place of work or community recreational spaces
- **Promoting the campaign message** in your newsletter or on hold messaging
- **Directing people to the Better Health Channel** website for information
betterhealth.vic.gov.au/get-vaccinated

Contact

For more information contact Community and Public Health Communications

pph.communications@health.vic.gov.au

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Section 1: Infection prevention and control measures

Hand hygiene resources

How to wash and dry hands with liquid soap and water



Poster: Hand hygiene and cough etiquette

[Download](#)

These posters show pictorially how to use hand sanitiser and wash hands effectively.

This content may be useful to print and place near wash basins or include in induction sessions or training.

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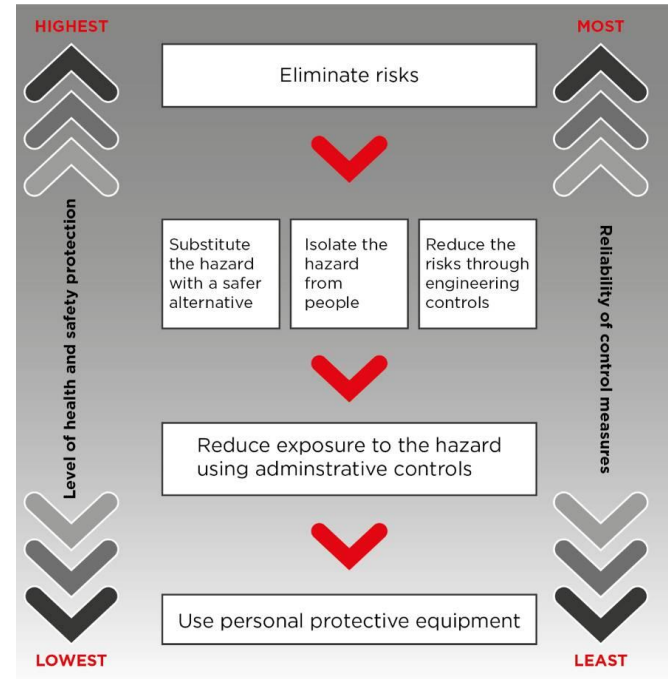
Infection prevention and control

Infection prevention and control guidelines

[Visit resource hub](#)

Information about the infection prevention and control (IPC) measures required to reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

- [Principles of infection prevention and control](#)
- [Standard and transmission-based precautions](#)
- [Personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Managing staff, visitors and outbreaks](#)
- [Ventilation](#)
- [Specific healthcare settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines References](#)



Information for visitors

Key messages for visitors:

- Stay at home if you're sick. If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, you should not visit people at risk of severe illness or sensitive settings such as hospitals and residential aged care.
- For more information on mask wearing for visitors, visit www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/covid-19/face-masks-covid-19
- [Visitor's factsheet – winter respiratory](#) – information for visitors on how to protect older Victorians in aged care

Key messages for health services and care providers:

- Sectors providing housing, care, or other services to people at increased risk of severe disease (senior Victorians, those with medical comorbidities or disability) should consider how they can help reduce transmission during this time. This is particularly relevant to health services (including primary care), aged care, disability care and ACCHOs.
- These actions may include the use of N-95 masks in clinical care settings, and use of recommended surveillance and testing for patients and staff.
- Residential Aged Care should take a risk-based approach to prevent respiratory illnesses from entering and spreading within the facility. During periods of high community transmission, facilities should undertake regular risk assessments and adjust safety measures, including enhancing advice on mask use, visitor guidance and entry requirements.
The [Victorian respiratory surveillance report](#) provides useful data on community levels of respiratory infections.

Section 2: Vaccination

Don't risk it. Get vaccinated today.

Section 2.1: Influenza

Influenza (flu) key messages

General flu key messages

Don't risk the flu. Get vaccinated today.

Flu season is here, and it can be serious. Choose to protect yourself and your loved ones with an annual flu vaccine.

The vaccine is free for eligible groups:

- Children aged 6 months to under 5 years
- **Adults aged 65 years and older**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and older
- Pregnant women (at any stage of pregnancy)
- Individuals with certain medical conditions that increase the risk of severe flu.

Find out more visit the betterhealthchannel.vic.gov.au/get-vaccinated

Don't risk the flu assets



Seniors (over 65) Poster
[Download](#)



Seniors (over 65) Social Media

Headline
Don't risk the flu

Post copy
This flu season, choose to protect yourself and your loved ones with an annual flu vaccine, free for those over 65.

Download the suite of assets and adapt the suggested post copy only:
[Static assets](#)

Department of Health channels:

- Instagram: [@VicGovDH](#)
- Facebook [@VicGovDH](#)

Section 2.2a: Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)

RSV – Key messages

Key messages

- RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) is a virus that causes upper and lower respiratory tract infection. RSV infection can cause severe disease, particularly in very young and older people.
- RSV is an important cause of respiratory disease and hospitalisation in older people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults, and people with conditions that increase their risk of severe RSV disease.
- Vaccination is a safe and effective way to protect against serious disease caused by RSV. Talk to your GP, Aboriginal health service, community pharmacy or your local council immunisation service about the RSV vaccine.
- A single dose of RSV vaccine is recommended to protect older people. RSV vaccine may be given at any time of the year, but, where possible, should be offered before the start of the RSV season.
- The vaccine can safely be given at the same time as other vaccines including influenza and COVID vaccines.
- The RSV vaccine for older Australians will be available for free through the NIP from 15 May 2026.

Further information on RSV for older Victorians

For more information on the RSV vaccine

For general public: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv

For the health sector: www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv

RSV for older Australians:

- [Advice for health professionals](#)
- [Consumer fact sheet](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [RSV vaccine and monoclonal antibody posters](#)

Age group or cohort	Administration of RSV vaccines and monoclonal antibodies by age group or cohort			
	RSV vaccines for adults		RSV monoclonal antibodies for infants and children	
	Abraxis® 0.5 mL (Pfizer)	Axxyo® 0.5 mL (GSK)	Bayfortus™ (Nirsevimab) 0.5 mL (Pfizer) (Single)	Bayfortus™ (Nirsevimab) 1 mL (BioCr) (Single)
Women from 28 weeks pregnancy	NIP FUNDED	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
Infants and children <24 months	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE	STATE & TERRITORY FUNDED	STATE & TERRITORY FUNDED
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people ≥60 years	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	NIP FUNDED	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
Adults 50-74 years (can consider vaccination)	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
Adults ≥75 years	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	NIP FUNDED	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
Adults 50-59 years with medical risk conditions that increase risk of severe RSV disease (can consider vaccination)	DO NOT USE	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE
Adults ≥60 years with medical risk conditions that increase risk of severe RSV disease (can consider vaccination)	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	AVAILABLE PRIVATELY BASED ON CLINICAL DECISION	DO NOT USE	DO NOT USE

Note: NIP FUNDED indicates vaccine is NIP funded. DO NOT USE indicates product is NOT recommended for that group. STATE & TERRITORY FUNDED indicates product funded under a state and territory program. AVAILABLE PRIVATELY indicates product only available through private prescription and is not funded. For further information including dosage and administration, refer to the Australian Immunisation Handbook chapter 17 [\(https://www.imz.net.au/immunisation-handbook\)](#)

Information current as of May 2025

Section 2.3: COVID-19

COVID-19 protective measures – key messages

COVID remains a part of our lives and right now we're experiencing an increase in cases across Victoria. As we go into the winter months, it's important to follow these steps to protect yourself and others:

- Stay home if you are unwell.
- Wear a face mask if you have symptoms or visiting sensitive settings, such as aged care facilities.
- Let fresh air in. Open windows and doors when safe and practical, it reduces the amount of viruses in the indoor air. Meet outside when possible.
- Wash or sanitise your hands thoroughly and regularly, particularly before and after touching your face.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Talk with your doctor now if you are at higher risk for complications from COVID-19. Discuss what to do if you get sick, including testing options and whether you are eligible for antiviral treatment.
- If you experience serious symptoms, seek medical attention.
- Stay up to date with your immunisations.

Immunity wanes over time. Regular COVID-19 vaccinations are the best way to maintain your protection against severe illness, hospitalisation and death from COVID-19.

For more information and to check if you are eligible for a further dose, visit [COVID-19 vaccine advice and recommendations](#). COVID-19 vaccines are free for all people in Australia, including those without a Medicare card.

COVID-19 social media - carousel

Post copy

There is more COVID in the community. Which means now is the time to be extra careful. If you're with someone who's has an underlying medical condition, a disability or an older person, remember to wear a mask, stay at home if sick, test before visiting, stay up to date with your vaccination, meet outdoors if you can and remind them about COVID medicines.

For more information, visit the [Better Health Channel](#).

[Click to download](#)



COVID-19 social media - vaccination

Post copy

With more COVID in the community, now is the perfect time to boost your immunity to protect yourself and your loved ones.

There are vaccines available that are highly effective at preventing severe disease.

Further doses are important to maintain protection and are free for everyone. If you are 65-74 years they are recommended every 12 months but you're eligible every six months. If you are 75 years or older, a further dose is recommended every 6 months.

Other groups are also recommended to get a further dose, with vaccines available at your GP or local pharmacy.

To check your eligibility, visit:

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/covid-19/covid-19-vaccination

[Click to download](#)



Section 2.4: Vaccination myth and facts

Supporting conversations about vaccination

+ THIS RESOURCE IS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

CONVERSATION GUIDE

FOR USE WITH ADULTS



Talking with adult patients who have questions

This guide aims to support you to have conversations with adult patients who have questions and concerns about vaccinations. There are two goals for these conversations: to increase your patient's confidence in the vaccine, and to vaccinate.



[MORE INFO](#)

For a brief summary, see the quick guide at skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals.

This [downloadable fact sheet](#), is based on the SKAI communications approach. It will help you have productive conversations with adults about vaccination.

+ THIS RESOURCE IS FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

CONVERSATION GUIDE



Addressing vaccine misinformation

This guide aims to support you as a healthcare professional to address vaccine misinformation. Use these evidence-based steps¹ to address misinformation (described in Step 4).



[MORE INFO](#)

For a brief summary, see the quick guide at skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals.

This [fact sheet](#) can be used in conjunction with the SKAI communications approach.

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Section 3: Alternative care pathways

Urgent care services: key messages

- If you need urgent healthcare now, but it's not life-threatening, get free help faster with Victoria's Urgent Care Services.
- Victoria's range of Urgent Care Services offer free help faster. Whether it's day or night, weekday or weekend, you can find the right urgent care you need now.
- You can choose to get urgent care in three ways
 - Walk into an [Urgent Care Clinic](#), open late and on weekends
 - Video call with [Virtual Emergency Care 24/7](#)
 - Phone [1300 60 60 24 Nurse-on-Call 24/7](#)
- You do not need a referral from your GP, an appointment or a Medicare card to use the services.
- Victoria's Urgent Care Services are available across Victoria and are staffed by expert urgent care doctors and nurses.
- If you are in a life-threatening situation, call triple zero (000) or visit your nearest emergency department.
- To learn more about Victoria's other Urgent Care Services, visit urgentcare.vic.gov.au
- Factsheets are available in: [English](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese simplified](#), [Chinese traditional](#), [Greek](#), [Italian](#), [Punjabi](#), [Turkish](#) and [Vietnamese](#).

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Virtual Emergency Department

Need urgent healthcare now? Video call with the Virtual Emergency Department.

Virtual Emergency Department is a free, 24/7 service that connects you to an emergency doctor or nurse from your computer or mobile. Adults and children can access the service from anywhere in Victoria, as well as carers or clinicians in Aged Care and other healthcare settings.

You do not need a referral from your GP, an appointment or a Medicare card to use the service. To use the service all you need is a device with a camera (mobile phone, computer, laptop or tablet).

Register today, so that when you or a patient needs urgent care, it's only a video call away. Pre-register with the Virtual Emergency Department at www.vved.org.au. If you experience any issues with the registration form, please call 03 9485 9070.

If you are in a life-threatening situation, call triple zero (000) or visit your nearest emergency department.

To learn more about our Urgent Care Services Victoria, visit urgentcare.vic.gov.au



Virtual Emergency Department



- ✔ Free video call
- ✔ 24/7 service
- ✔ Easy to use
- ✔ No waiting in hospital emergency

Urgent Care **Services**
Victoria



[Click to download VED communications kit](#)

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Residential in-reach services: key messages

- A number of health services in Victoria provide clinical care to people living in residential aged care services through residential in-reach services.
- The residential in-reach services are staffed by hospital-based nurses and doctors who provide telephone support for and on-site assessment of aged care residents.
- This may avoid the need for you to travel to a hospital emergency department.
- Residential in-reach is not intended to replace the care that you should receive from your residential aged care service or your doctor.
- In some circumstances it will be necessary for you to go to hospital. Residential in-reach can assess and discuss the most appropriate place for you to receive care, and advocate for your transfer to the appropriate level of hospital care when required.
- All residential in-reach services operate from Monday to Friday. Some residential in-reach services operate during the evening and many operate over the weekend.
- **More information including contact numbers can be found on the Better Health Channel:**
www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/residential-in-reach-services

Section 4: Residential Aged Care providers

Residential Aged Care: Key messages

- The Commonwealth is the funder and regulator of residential aged care.
- Residential aged care providers in Australia are [obligated](#) by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission) to have effective infection prevention and control programs in place to protect residents, staff, and visitors from infectious diseases.
- The Commission monitors these programs and conducts regulatory activities, including spot checks and assessment contacts, to ensure compliance with national guidelines and standards.
- The Commonwealth and Commission have a range of resources available at -
 - [Infection prevention and control information](#) - Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission
 - [Infection prevention and control in aged care](#) - Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
 - [Supporting visitors and partners in care with infection prevention and control](#)
 - [The Aged Care Infection Prevention and Control Guide](#) - Aust Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare
- Some key things you can do are: ensure staff are vaccinated and offer your residents vaccinations, make use of Residential In Reach, Virtual Emergency Department, Nurse On Call and Urgent Care Clinics.
- The Victorian Department of Health provides support to residential aged care in the prevention, preparedness for and management of respiratory outbreaks: [Acute respiratory infection management in residential care facilities | health.vic.gov.au](#)

Contact us

If you would like more information, please contact:

Community and Public Health Communications pph.communications@health.vic.gov.au