

### **WHAT EXACTLY IS CORONAVIRUS AND COVID-19?**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses known to cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases such as this new coronavirus that's originated in Hubei Province, China. The disease caused by this particular virus is named COVID-19.

### **WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other colds and flus and include:

- fever
- sore throat
- cough
- tiredness
- difficulty breathing.

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying these symptoms are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness – not coronavirus.

### **HOW IS THIS CORONAVIRUS SPREAD?**

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared.
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes.
- 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.

### **WHAT DO I DO IF I DEVELOP SYMPTOMS?**

If you develop symptoms you should arrange to see your doctor for urgent assessment. You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them any travel history or if you have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. You must remain isolated, such as in your home, until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

### **WHO NEEDS TO ISOLATE?**

All people who arrive in Australia from any international destination as of midnight 15 March 2020, or think they may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus, are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

### **SOMEONE I LIVE WITH IS GETTING TESTED FOR COVID-19. SHOULD I SELF-ISOLATE AND GET TESTED AS WELL?**

If a household member is a suspected case, you may need to be isolated. This will be determined by your public health unit on a case-by-case basis. Your public health unit will contact you if you need to isolate.

### **WHAT DOES ISOLATE IN YOUR HOME MEAN?**

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must stay at home to prevent it spreading to other people. You might also be asked to stay at home if you may have been exposed to the virus.

Staying at home means you:

- 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

You do not need to wear a mask in your home. If you need to go out to seek medical attention, wear a surgical mask (if you have one) to protect others.

You should stay in touch by phone and on-line with your family and friends.

### **WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?**

Social distancing is one way to help slow the spread of viruses such as COVID-19. Social distancing includes staying at home when you are unwell, avoiding large public gatherings if they're not essential, keeping a distance of 1.5 metres between you and other people whenever possible and minimising physical contact such as shaking hands, especially with people at higher risk of developing serious symptoms, such as older people and people with existing health conditions.

### **WHO IS MOST AT RISK OF A SERIOUS ILLNESS?**

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly. From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at most risk of serious infection are:

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- aboriginal and torres strait islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness
- people with chronic medical conditions
- people in group residential settings
- Very young children and babies.

### **HOW IS THE VIRUS TREATED?**

There is no specific treatment for coronaviruses. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. Most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care and basic medical supplies.

### **HOW CAN WE HELP PREVENT THE SPREAD OF CORONAVIRUS?**

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and keeping your distance from others when you are sick is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet.

- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
- If unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).
- Exercise personal responsibility for social distancing measures.

### **CAN I VISIT FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN AGED CARE FACILITIES?**

The outbreak of any virus in aged care facilities can cause significant problems. However COVID-19 is a health risk for older people. In order to protect older people, restrictions apply. Do not visit aged care facilities if you have:

- Recently returned from overseas (last 14 days)
- been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- have a fever or symptoms of a respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, shortness of breath)

From 1 May you must have your influenza vaccination in order to visit an aged care facility.

The Government has also announced that aged care facilities must take extra precautions when it comes to visits, including:

- ensuring visits are kept short
- ensuring visits are kept to a maximum of two visitors at a time
- ensuring that visits are in a resident's room, outdoors, or in a specific area designated by the facility and not in communal areas
- there be no large group visits or gatherings
- school groups of any size are not to visit
- children under the age of 16 are not permitted, except in special circumstances.

If visiting family and friends in residential aged care facilities is not possible, it's important to keep in touch via phone and video calls.

### **CAN I GO TO CHURCH AND/OR SOCIALS?**

Currently, the Australian Government has advised that non-essential outside gatherings should be limited to 500 people.

From 18 March 2020, non-essential, organised indoor gatherings of more than 100 people will no longer be permitted.

### **IS SHUTTING THE DOORS OF OUR CHURCHES SHOWING A DISTINCT LAKE OF FAITH THAT THE LORD CAN DELIVER US FROM COVID-19 AND PROVIDE FOR US?**

Let's be reminded that all through history, and throughout our lives, God has been in absolute control.

At times it can appear that things are completely out of control, but we know that there's never been a moment when God has lost control of what's going on. We need to remember His words; "He will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is stayed on Him."

We need to continue to keep our minds on Him today, and let's keep our confidence and our hope alive today that our God has a purpose and a plan for each of us.

At this time we are practicing social distancing but not spiritual distancing. Through technology we will still continue to gather together, worship together, grow together and celebrate together God's sovereignty and power.

The decision to shut the doors of our church has not been made out of fear or faithlessness but rather in the season we are filled with faith. The decision has been made in accordance to the directive of our State and Federal Governments, we wish to support our country's leaders, those who are fighting the spread of the COVID-19 virus. And the decision has been made because your health and your family's health are important to us.

### **CAN WE MEET IN OUR HOMES AND HAVE 'HOME CHURCH'?**

As you know, church buildings are closed, but churches are not! This means that church will probably look different this week and for a while to come.

Gatherings of less than 100 people should follow extra precautions, including:

- Considering the size of the space, the number of people in it, and how much room people have to move around safely. People should be able to keep 1.5 metres apart.
- Hand hygiene products such as soap and water and suitable bins must be available. These must be frequently cleaned.
- You should not spend more than two hours somewhere if there is a lot of movement and interaction.
- You should not spend more than four hours somewhere if there is a lot of movement and interaction.

### **WHERE CAN I GO TO FIND RESOURCES THAT WILL ASSIST ME IN RUNNING A HOME CHURCH?**

There are many ways to stay connected with our church families and plenty of resources on running home church. Check out these resources as a start:

- Disciple.org.au – you were sent out this card of resource late last year, but [here](#) is a link to some resources.
- Waymaker - <https://www.waymaker.tv/> and there are apps too!
- [churchonline.hopechannel.com](http://churchonline.hopechannel.com)
- <https://www.facebook.com/HopeDigital/>
- We encourage you to go to your relevant app store and download the [Hope Channel App](#)
- Also look to your church's communications, emails and Facebook messages to stay connected with them.

### **HOW DO I RETURN MY TITHES AND OFFERINGS IF MY CHURCH IS SHUT?**

It is very simple to return your tithes and offerings to the Church even if the building is shut. You can easily download the E-giving App (<https://egiving.org.au>) and proceed to give using this online method.

If for some reason you are unable to give using the online E-giving App keep a record and put aside the tithes and offerings you would normally return and at the first opportunity give your 'collection' to your local church treasurer or pastor.

### **IS MY PASTOR STILL ABLE TO VISIT ME DURING THIS COVID-19 CRISIS TIME?**

Yes, if it is urgent that you need visitation, your pastor or perhaps church elder is able to visit you provided you have not;

- Been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Been in contact with anyone who is suspected of having COVID-19.

- Are showing any symptoms of COVID-19.
- In circumstances where people are self-isolating because they are symptomatic or have been in contact with someone who has been symptomatic, no pastoral visits should be undertaken until their isolation ends. However, do offer phone support.
  
- In circumstances where someone is self-isolating for their protection and a pastoral visit is thought to be necessary, please make sure you follow rigorous health and hygiene practices and maintain social distancing.

### WHERE DO I GO IF I WANT TO FIND OUT WHAT THE LATEST INFORMATION IS ABOUT COVID-19 AND THE CHURCH.

Here are a couple of handy sites to keep an eye on;

- Facebook – Like our homepage [Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia.](#)
- Record – <https://record.adventistchurch.com/> or register for the Record e-communication [here](#).
- Conference website – <https://sydney.adventist.org.au/news-archive/coronavirus>