Information regarding Coronavirus infection (COVID-19) is updated regularly and is constantly evolving.

Frequently Asked Questions

Am I at greater risk of acquiring the coronavirus infection?
HIV infection does not increase your risk of contracting coronavirus infection after exposure. However, people with HIV who have a coronavirus infection may be more likely to experience more significant symptoms or complications, especially those who are older than 60 years, those with a low CD4 cell count or other chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, lung disease, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Symptoms include fever, flu-like illness (cough, sore throat, tiredness), shortness of breath and loss of smell or taste. Less common are headache, diarrhoea and confusion.

What precautions should I take for my personal protection?
The most important things you can do are to practice careful social distancing and good personal hygiene. Keep more than 1.5 metres away from people as much as possible. Good handwashing using soap and water is essential. Avoid touching your face and sneeze into your elbow.

Do I need to wear a mask?
At Alfred Health, we have measures in place to ensure everyone in our hospital is wearing masks to protect our community, patients and staff. If you are visiting Alfred Health as a patient or visitor regardless of where you live, you will be required to wear an Alfred Health issued mask upon entry to our hospital. This will be given to you after your temperature is taken at one of our screening temperature stations. Our staff will also be wearing masks.

Important facts about wearing masks:

- Always perform hand hygiene before putting on a mask.
- Wear your mask throughout your entire Alfred Health visit.
- Avoid touching the front of your mask when wearing it.
- Never wear your mask around your neck or hang it from one ear.
- Perform hand hygiene before removing a mask.
- Only remove your mask by the loops.
- Place into general waste bin at the exit points.
- Clean your hands after this.
- Our staff can support you in putting on a mask, and can also answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding masks.
Should I have the flu and pneumonia vaccinations?
The HIV Service recommends influenza vaccination for everyone when it becomes available in April. The Pneumococcal vaccination is recommended for people with
HIV over 60 years, or with chronic lung disease. Neither of these vaccinations will protect you against COVID-19.

Should I have a contingency plan for Antiretroviral Medication?
Ensure you have a month’s supply of medication to allow for postal delays if your script is being mailed to you.

Should I come to my outpatient clinic?
If you have an outpatient appointment, please call us before attending. If you are coming in to have bloods taken please call us before attending to book at time we are needing to avoid ‘drop ins’.
To minimise visits to our sites, we are currently prioritising urgent appointments. However, please contact us beforehand, so we can determine how best to support you. We may reschedule your appointment to a later date, or use telehealth (i.e. phone or video link consultation) to provide care. Our team will contact you regarding any changes.
Your individual care remains paramount, so please contact your Clinic Team if you have any questions. Please contact us before your appointment if you are subject to quarantine restrictions due to recent international travel or exposure to a confirmed case of coronavirus.

Who should I contact if I have symptoms?
See your GP if you have any symptoms or you are concerned. COVID-19 presents just like other colds or the flu so it is important to get tested.

Should I travel overseas?
Current travel advice is available on Australian Smart Traveller website. Restrictions on outbound travel by Australian citizens and permanent residents remain in place, in accordance with the health advice to the Government. If planning to travel consider contacting your travel insurance provider.