



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): ADVICE TO BA MEMBERS

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BY BOWLS AUSTRALIA

Updated: March 22, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is increasingly having an impact on the global community and is a rapidly evolving issue.

Government organisations, public health units and the World Health Organisation (WHO) continue to provide accurate, timely and detailed updates relevant to the whole community.

The resource below is intended to provide an overview of the currently available information related to the virus and what measures and precautions members of the Australian bowls community should put in place.

Latest bowls-specific advice:

- The Australian Federal Government has announced that all licensed clubs and pubs, entertainment venues, indoor sports venues, casinos, cinemas, and

places of worship will be closed as of 12pm, March 23. Cafes and restaurants will be restricted to takeaway only. (March 22, 2020)

- State governments have enacted their own strict measures to limit any non-essential activities. Please check with your relevant state or territory government authority for your local restrictions. (March 22, 2020)
- The Australian Federal Government has limited non-essential indoor gatherings to 100 people and one person every four square metres. Outdoors, it remains at 500 people. (March 20, 2020)
- Bowls Australia announces changes to upcoming major events (March 19, 2020)
- Airline offerings in relation to changed/cancelled flights
- 2020 World Bowls Championships to be postponed indefinitely (March 17, 2020)
- Bowls Australia recommends immediate suspension of all bowls events (March 17, 2020)

National and International events affected:

- 2020 World Bowls Championships – **POSTPONED INDEFINITELY**
- 2020 Australian Open – **CANCELLED** (All entry fee payments for this year's event will be refunded as soon as practicable.)
- 2020 Australian Indoor Championships – **CANCELLED**

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus. Symptoms range from a mild cough to pneumonia. Some people recover easily, others may get very sick very quickly. There is evidence that it spreads from person to person. Good hygiene can prevent infection.

COVID-19 was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan City in China.

The most common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. It can be difficult to tell the difference between COVID-19 and other common respiratory illness particularly in the early stages of illness. Individuals should consult with their doctor by calling ahead. The doctor can take a thorough history, including travel history, perform a physical exam and make a recommendation regarding testing for COVID-19.

How unwell does COVID-19 make you?

COVID-19 results in a spectrum of illness ranging from possible asymptomatic carriage, common cold to severe cases requiring hospital admission. In a small minority of cases, COVID-19 can be fatal.

How contagious is COVID-19 and how does it spread?

Analysis of the number of cases from the Diamond Princess suggests that COVID-19 is more contagious than seasonal influenza.

This can change based on the circumstances the outbreak is occurring in and it is expected this will be refined over time as more is known.

The virus is transmitted primarily through respiratory droplets. There is ongoing research to determine if there are other possible modes of transmission such as faecal or through the air.

What is currently known about the clinical course of infection?

The estimated incubation period is between 1-14 days but is about five days on average. The incubation period is the time from when exposure to the virus occurs until symptoms start. Symptoms can persist for longer than three weeks, although the duration of illness will be highly variable.

How do I reduce my risk of getting COVID-19?

Hand hygiene remains the single best action individuals can take to reduce their risk of acquiring any respiratory or gastrointestinal tract infection. While COVID-19 is a global concern the number of cases of influenza globally far outweighs the number of COVID-19 as reported on the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS). Annual influenza vaccination remains an important infection prevention measure.

You should be vigilant with frequent hand washing using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. Make sure you adhere to 'illness etiquette'. If you are coughing and sneezing, do so away from people into a tissue, your elbow or hands. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, make sure you wash your hands afterwards. Seek medical review early if you are feeling unwell.

Everyone must practise good personal hygiene to protect against infection and prevent the virus from spreading.

Good hygiene includes:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- disposing of tissues properly
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- using alcohol-based hand sanitisers
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces
- if you are sick, avoiding contact with others and staying more than 1.5 metres away from people

Social distancing

One way to slow the spread of viruses is social distancing. For example:

- 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
- minimising physical contact, especially with people at higher risk such as older people and people with existing health conditions

Find out more about social distancing and avoiding public gatherings and visits to vulnerable groups.

Surgical masks

Surgical masks in the community are only helpful in preventing people who have coronavirus disease from spreading it to others.

If you are well, you do **not** need to wear a surgical mask. There is little evidence that widespread use of surgical masks in healthy people prevents transmission in public.

Keep up to date with developments

- Australian Government Department of Health
- Johns Hopkins COVID-19 dashboard
- WHO emergency dashboard
- WHO situation reports
- Smart Traveller DFAT
- WHO travel advice

Coronavirus Health Information Line

Call this line if you are seeking information on coronavirus (COVID-19). The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

1800 020 080