



## Updates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on coronavirus (COVID-19)

This update provides information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and communities to stay safe during the coronavirus outbreak. It's important to stay informed about the outbreak. Advice is updated regularly at [australia.gov.au](https://australia.gov.au).

### Key updates

- Dr Ngiare Brown's tips to stay active
- Keeping healthy and strong
- Stay home, especially if you are unwell
- Looking after our mental health and wellbeing
- Easter during the coronavirus outbreak
- Follow official advice

### Dr Ngiare Brown's tips to stay active

Dr Ngiare Brown, a proud Yuin nation woman, mother, and community member from the South Coast of New South Wales shares ways to keep our mob safe during the coronavirus outbreak.

Dr Ngiare says, being stuck in one place can be challenging, but there's a lot of ways to stay active.

- Know we are helping to keep all of our community, our Elders and our children safe and well
- Read, learn and practice a language, our own language
- Dance

- Play board games
- Challenge your family members to physical activities and creative ways to get 10,000 steps done inside
- Make sure you keep your brains and your bodies active

"In my day to day work as a doctor, I usually travel to see children and adolescents in their communities," says Dr Ngiare.

"Because of the coronavirus, I've had to change the way I do my work in order to keep my mob safe, but also still see the children that need us, so we're using video links and telemedicine to do consultations and chat to children and their families.

We are a resourceful people and we have lots of other ways of doing our usual work."

You can listen to Dr Ngiare's message [here](#).



## Keeping healthy and strong

During this time, it's important to keep ourselves and our families as healthy as possible.

- Make sure you eat a range of healthy food, including fruit and veggies. Drink lots of water.
- Make sure to continue taking your normal medicines and keep up to date with appointments and check-ups. Give Elders and older people in the community a ring to make sure they are too.
- If you can manage to give up the smokes now it will be much better for your health. If you need help to quit smoking call the Aboriginal Quitline on 13 78 48 or download the My QuitBuddy mobile app – it's free. Speak to a health professional or counsellor for advice on the best support for you. It's an important time right now to manage our stress levels.
- If you do smoke, don't share smokes with other people. Sharing smokes, food or drinks can spread germs.
- Keep up to date with a 715 health check. Many health clinics are providing these through telehealth, a video call or phone call with a Doctor or health practitioner. Call your medical service to check if telehealth is available.
- Remember to get a flu shot – it is free for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over six months old. Call your doctor first and ask if they have the vaccine yet, or to let them know you are coming so you aren't sitting in the waiting room for too long. The flu shot won't protect you from getting coronavirus, but it can protect you from the flu.

### **Stay home, especially if you are unwell**

Everyone should stay home where possible. This is especially important for anyone with a chronic illness and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50. Only go out if you are shopping for food or essential items, receiving medical care, exercising, or travelling to work or education.

If you're isolating at home and you don't feel well, call your Doctor, clinic or medical service. They can tell you what to do.

If you are feeling unwell, don't feel shame. You can...

- Call your local medical service, health clinic or someone you trust in the community.
- Call the 24 hour National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.

Make sure you follow the new public gathering rules. Only two people can be out at public places together. The new law can be enforced by the police. This new law does not apply to members of the same household.

Visit [australia.gov.au](http://australia.gov.au) for the latest advice and links to the rules for each state and territory.

### **Looking after our mental health and wellbeing**

Coronavirus is changing the way we live, work, communicate and connect with people. These changes can be hard for our communities. It's important to take care of ourselves, our family, friends and community. Doing things for your mental health and wellbeing is more important now than ever.

Being physically isolated doesn't mean you can't yarn. Call your friends and family on your phone, try making video calls, or have a yarn from the yard.

[Gayaa Dhuwi \(Proud Spirit\) www.gayaadhuwi.org.au](http://www.gayaadhuwi.org.au) has information about looking after yourself at this time. They are also developing culturally appropriate mental health and wellbeing resources. They will be available on social media, NITV and podcasts.

Stay connected and check in with family and the community. Together, we can keep our culture strong and keep our mob safe.

### **Easter during the coronavirus outbreak**

As the Easter holiday is coming up, it is important to remember that we must adjust our celebrations during the coronavirus outbreak.

The coronavirus affects us all, and it will affect the way we celebrate.

Remember only one person can visit a household at any time, and only two people can meet in public. Always keep 2 big steps away from other people. There are other ways to celebrate Easter together.

This is not a time to travel. Stay connected with your family, friends and community via phone or the internet.

- Have Easter lunch with your loved ones via video calls
- Have an Easter Egg Hunt with your household or children, hide chocolates in your house, backyard or garden
- Drop off eggs or a special meal to someone
- Leave a note so they know you are thinking of them
- Search online for Easter egg hunt computer games or Easter quizzes.

### **Follow official advice**

Information is changing regularly. It's important we stay connected with official information and reduce the risk of misinformation in our communities.

Stay up to date with all the information from government at [australia.gov.au](https://australia.gov.au). All the information about coronavirus is linked from this website. You can also download an app to your phone called 'Coronavirus Australia'.

There are also [resources and information](#) to keep our mob safe.

**HELP OUR COMMUNITIES TO STAY HEALTHY, STRONG AND  
CONNECTED, BY SHARING TIPS ONLINE #KEEPOURMOBSAFE**

