



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.

Key updates

- See your doctor without leaving home
- Looking after our mental health
- Staying connected
- Stay safe at home
- Staying safe online

See your doctor without leaving home

It's really important that we stay at home as much as possible to stop the spread of coronavirus in our communities.

If you need to speak to a doctor, you can do this over the phone or the internet using a service called telehealth. This means you won't have to leave your home unless you really need to, keeping you and the community safe.

A telehealth appointment is the same as a regular appointment and is covered by Medicare. You still choose your doctor, and you don't have to be an existing patient. You can also use telehealth to speak to other health professionals like a midwife, psychologist or a specialist.

All you need is a phone, tablet or computer to make an appointment. You can also use apps like Skype, WhatsApp, or FaceTime, or just make a phone call. Contact your health service to find out how to get started.

It's important to keep up with all of your regular medical appointments, but make sure you speak to your doctor or medical service first about having appointments through telehealth.

Using telehealth will help keep you and your community safe and healthy.

Looking after your mental health

Many of us are feeling sad, stressed or anxious during this uncertain time.

We're missing doing things we normally do, such as spending time with friends and family, or connecting with country and culture.

Keeping our families and communities safe by spending more time at home can have an impact on the way we feel, our thoughts and our behaviours.

Some of us are already dealing with other health issues and trauma, which can make coping at a time like this more difficult.

It is very important to think about our mental health to stay strong. A new organisation called Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) Australia, is providing advice on ways for our communities to protect their mental health and wellbeing through this time. Visit gayaadhuwi.org.au for the latest advice.

Check out this [music video 'Survivor' by the Lowitja Institute](#).

Staying connected

Staying connected with people in your community is one of the most important things you can do to maintain your mental health during this time.

Use your phone or the internet to keep in touch with people. Reach out to people you know for a yarn and talk to them about how you are feeling. Ask them if they are OK.

If you are feeling down, you can also talk to a health professional, such as a counsellor. This can be a big help. headtohealth.gov.au can also provide you with some additional advice on services that can provide support.

While our lives have changed for the time being, you can use this time to teach the younger people in your home about culture. You can connect with them through learning and sharing language that strengthens our cultural identity.

Playing an instrument and listening to music can help you with your stress levels.

Find games you can play with family.

Find things to do that you enjoy or try something new such as painting or another type of art, or a craft, like weaving.

If you have access to the internet, YouTube is filled with videos that can help you learn a new hobby or skill, like playing the guitar, doing some home improvements, sewing, or cooking new recipes.

If you have access to a smart phone, try video calls or connect via apps with other people outside of your own home.

Look after your physical health as best you can by eating healthy foods and exercising. When exercising, make sure to keep two big steps away from other people.

Remember that this coronavirus epidemic won't last forever and that we are a strong, resilient people.

If you or someone you know needs help, call Beyond Blue on 1800 512 348, Life Line on 13 11 14 or the Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.



Staying safe at home

During these unusual times, there may be an increase in tension in communities across Australia, regardless of culture or race.

It is an important time to look out for others in our community. You can do this by calling people and making sure they are OK. If you think there is someone in your community who may be in danger in their home, reach out to them and yarn about it. You can tell them about some of the help lines listed below.

If you think a child may be in danger in their home, you can speak to your local community leaders, local Aboriginal controlled health organisation, local medical service, the police, or any of the support lines listed below. They will be able to provide advice and help.

If you are not feeling safe inside your home for any reason you **CAN** get help. Don't allow yourself, or your children, to suffer.

- Call 000 for police and ambulance if you are in danger.

- [National Family Violence Prevention Legal Service](#) (03) 9244 3333) helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have experienced family violence.
- 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) is a 24-hour sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line.
- Mensline Australia (1300 78 99 78) is a telephone and online counselling service for men with emotional health and relationship concerns.
- Lifeline (13 11 14).
- Kids Help Line (1800 551 800).

Dr Joel Wenitong has developed this [video to help communities stay safe during coronavirus outbreak](#).

Staying safe online

Because we are spending more time at home, many of us are spending more time on our computers and the internet, including our young people.

This means we need to be more careful than ever to make sure we are all staying safe online. Just like you protect kids from dangers in the real world, it is important to protect their safety in their online world too.

Make sure to supervise what your kids are looking at online and make sure they aren't chatting to people that you don't know or have given them permission to chat with.

If you're unsure how to stay safe online, you can download the [My Online Journey app](#). Resources to help parents with online safety are also available at [eSafety.gov.au](#).

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

