

Protecting yourself and others from coronavirus

Essential information for people who smoke



This interim information is based on what is currently known about coronavirus (COVID-19) and the current situation in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Government will update interim information as needed and as additional information becomes available. Visit www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au for the latest information.

COVID-19 is a virus that causes respiratory disease. If you smoke, you are more vulnerable to respiratory disease. Now is a good time for you to stop smoking.

How does COVID-19 impact your health if you smoke?

Smoking damages the lungs so they don't work as well. If you smoke, it is possible that you will experience greater ill-health and may be at higher risk of complications or a severe case of COVID-19 if you do become infected.

Reasons to stop smoking

- **Smoking can contribute to spreading the virus**
If you smoke, it is likely that your fingers will touch your lips more often. This can make you more vulnerable to COVID-19. Stopping smoking will improve your hand-to-mouth hygiene and reduce the spread of the virus.
- **Smoking impacts the health of others**
If you smoke and are self-isolating at home with your family, their risk of exposure to second-hand smoke will increase. Stopping smoking will remove this risk. This is good for their health too.
- **Smoking impacts access to healthcare**
Health services will be limited as COVID-19 spreads. Stopping smoking means you will be healthier and in time, less vulnerable to smoking-related health problems. This will leave health services more able to focus on people who are sick from COVID-19.

- **Smoking is expensive**
Stopping smoking will save you and your family money.
- **Smoking and stress**
Like many other people who smoke, you may believe that smoking relieves your stress. However, smoking only relieves the stress of nicotine withdrawal. It does not relieve any other stress, in fact it increases it.

If you stop smoking, after some initial withdrawal symptoms (which can be reduced with medications and nicotine replacement therapies) you will feel less stressed over time.

What can you do now to improve your health?

Stopping smoking will improve your lung function within a few months. This will reduce the likelihood of severe lung complications if you do get COVID-19. Stopping smoking has many benefits beyond any link with COVID-19. Now is a good time for you to stop smoking.

Where to get help

- Call the Quitline on **13 7848**
- Visit www.quittas.org.au
- Speak to your doctor or pharmacist about medications and nicotine replacement therapies

For more information visit
www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au



How can I stay updated?

Advice is changing frequently as the COVID-19 situation evolves in Tasmania. Please refer to the following websites for the latest information:

- Australian Government Department of Health
www.health.gov.au
- Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website
www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au
- Official public health information
www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus

You can also call the following numbers if you need help or more information:

- Tasmanian Public Health Hotline **1800 671 738**
- National Coronavirus Helpline **1800 020 080**