

# CORONAVIRUS AND PARKINSON'S

## **Supporting people with Parkinson's through the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

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Parkinson's Victoria is closely monitoring the coronavirus COVID-19 situation as it develops in Victoria.

The health, safety and well-being of our community is our priority.

A person living with Parkinson's has no increased risk of contracting COVID-19. However, this virus has been shown to pose a greater risk of severity to those aged over 60 years, with an underlying health condition, including Parkinson's.

For this reason, we recommend you follow the current Government advice on sensible precautions around hygiene, social distancing, and travel restrictions.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

One way to slow the spread of viruses, including coronavirus, is social distancing. This means spending less time with other people and in public places, including:

- 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,

While face-to-face contact and socialising is reduced, remember to keep connected to family and friends via phone calls and social media. Ask for help to join on-line channels through which you can visually communicate.

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Health Information Line

**1800 644 189**

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### HYGIENE MANAGEMENT

Good hygiene practices include:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- disposing of tissues properly
- washing your hands often with soap and water
- 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
- cleaning and sanitising frequently used objects such as mobiles, keys and wallets

### PARKINSON'S MEDICATIONS

We are not anticipating any supply chain issues of Parkinson's medications. We will inform you, via our website and Facebook feed, if we are notified of any change to medication supply.

While at your GP's, make sure you get enough prescriptions so you don't need to return when there is likely to be increased demand on Health services. Try to get some additional medication in reserve if possible.

Check with your local pharmacy regarding medication deliveries.

Once you have your scripts, see if you can leave them with the pharmacist so your medication can be delivered in the event you are not able leave your home.

It is important to remember to keep taking your Parkinson's medication/s even if you do become unwell with a virus of any kind, including coronavirus.

Speak to your GP or neurologist if you have any concerns.

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### **STAY AT HOME ADVICE**

People aged over 70 years and those with a chronic illness aged over 60 years, have now been “strongly advised” to self-isolate at home as much as practical to limit their interaction with others for their own protection.

This does not mean you cannot go outside. Instead the advice is to go outside accompanied by a support person for the purposes of getting some fresh air or for recreation, but to limit contact with others as much as possible.

If you do not have a support person who is able to help you with grocery shopping, you should contact your local MP, council or community organisation, such as Neighbourhood House, many of which are coordinating volunteer shoppers.

### **TELEHEALTH**

Effective from the 30 March, the Australian Government expanded Medicare-subsidised telehealth services to provide continued access to essential primary health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means you will be able to access bulk-billed telehealth consultations and not have to pay any out-of-pocket costs.

Among the services included are GP services and some consultation services provided by other medical specialists, nurse practitioners, mental health treatment, chronic disease management, services to patients in aged care facilities and after-hours consultations.

The Government has also taken measures to ensure medical practices stay open to provide face-to-face services essential for patients with conditions that can't be treated through telehealth.

Contact your doctor or medical specialist to discuss the most appropriate course of care for you.

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### **INFLUENZA VACCINATION**

Infections such as influenza may increase the severity of COVID-19 if you were to contract it.

Speak with your GP and make sure you book in to receive the Influenza vaccination as soon as it is available. You should also speak to your GP about having the Pneumonia (pneumococcal) inoculation.

### **NEUROLOGIST APPOINTMENTS**

Check with your Neurologist to make sure any up-coming appointments have not been rescheduled or changed to a skype or telehealth appointment.

### **LIKE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE**

The Parkinson's Victoria Facebook page is the place to find the most current updates and information on COVID-19 and other information of value to people living with Parkinson's and their families.

### **PARKINSON'S VICTORIA IS HERE FOR YOU**

For general advice around staying healthy and connected during this challenging time, call our Health Information Line on: 1800 644 189.

For medical advice, contact your GP.

Our Health Team is monitoring the situation and will update relevant information specific to people living with Parkinson's via our website, Facebook page and our 1800 644 189 phone line.

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### **STAYING UP TO DATE**

#### **Current information and health guidance:**

Department of Health (National)

Department of Health and Human Services (State)

#### **The latest travel advice:**

Smart Traveller

#### **Emotional well-being:**

Beyond Blue

Lifeline

#### **Living with Parkinson's :**

Parkinson's Victoria

Facebook page

Website - [www.parkinsons-vic.org.au](http://www.parkinsons-vic.org.au)

Information line - 1800 644 189

# **stay at home & stay safe**



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