

Protection against coronavirus and precautionary measures to consider for the reopening of our businesses.

As life slowly turns towards normal in Australia (slower in some states than others), we must remember that the virus is still prevalent in the community, and the risk of contagion continues to be of concern, especially as the cold and flu season starts to set in.

A few essential reminders of what we should consider and look out for to protect our businesses and our community moving forward. Naturally, always refer to appropriate medical advice.

What is COVID-19 in real terms?

Without repeating what the virus is or does, it is important to remember the basics and how the virus is spread. The virus is transmitted primarily through droplets in saliva or discharge from the nose, and can travel 10 metres from a sneeze. The droplets are 0.1 – 0.3 microns (3 millionths of a metre, or 0.003mm) in size. This is what we need to protect against.

What are the symptoms to look out for?

As per the World Health Organisation website:

Most Common Symptoms	Less Common Symptoms	Serious Symptoms
Fever Dry cough Tiredness	Aches and pains Sore throat Diarrhoea Conjunctivitis Headache Loss of taste or smell A rash on skin Discolouration of fingers or toes	Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath Chest pain or pressure Loss of speech or movement

What protective measures can we take when we reopen?

Social Distancing

Easier said than done for many. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis recently published a proximity index, which listed and ranked those occupations that required the most physical contact. Amongst the professions listed were hairdressers, allied health professionals (in fact almost all health professionals, although telehealth has helped significantly in Australia), drivers, pilots, flight attendants, educators, and many others.

Temperature reading

Taking a customer/patient's temperature (ideally with a non-contact thermometer) upon their entrance is an effective way to identify whether they have a fever.

Washing hands

20 seconds! You should wash like you are preparing for surgery, in between fingers and past your wrists. A great simple article explaining the effectiveness of soap can be found online by Prof. Pall Thordarson, Professor of Chemistry at the University of NSW. It really is the best way, but not always practical.

Sanitiser

As advised by W.H.O, for a sanitiser to be effective, it must have at least 60% pure alcohol. Any other sanitiser will not help. An alcohol-based sanitiser with chlorhexidine gluconate, a broad spectrum biocide that is effective in protecting against enveloped viruses (e.g. HIV), is proven to be the most effective.

Masks

The right mask will effectively shield you from other carriers of the virus, and shield others from your inadvertent spray and droplets. Regardless of the mask you choose, always try and find one which has been TGA approved in Australia, wear it properly and make sure it fits. These are the most common types of masks:

Face Mask

- Easily accessible
- Generally 3-ply
- More likely to shield others from your spray than protect you from them
- The cheapest option

Surgical Mask

- Designed to be used in surgery
- Much stronger and much more resistant to liquid pressure
- Based on Australian standards, L1 surgical masks are resistant to a fluid pressure of 80mmHg, L2 withstands 120mmHg and L3 160mmHg

P2/ N95/ FFP2/ KN95

- Australian/ American/ European/ Chinese equivalent standards
- Able to filter out at least 95% of non-oil airborne particles, sized 0.3 micron or more (clearly advantageous given the size of the coronavirus particle)
- Can be a flat folded soft mask or hard moulded round cone mask
- Medical Grade N95 masks are designed specifically for medical use, and are much more resistant to blocking droplets, fluids and secretions. It can also resist ventilation up to a great pressure of 343 Pa.

If we can provide any other information:

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