



Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

PHONE 1300 288 476

This line operates Monday to Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm.

You can also email us:

- admin@autismsa.org.au for general enquiries
- mypathways@autismsa.org.au to speak to one of our My Pathways team members
- COVID19@autismsa.org.au if you have COVID-19 related enquiries

Updated 25 November 2020

To our extended Autism SA Family, we hope you find this consolidated reference of information useful.

Kind regards, the Autism SA team



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About COVID-19 and government advice

Who can I call about COVID-19?

National Coronavirus Information Line (Australian Government Department of Health)	1800 020 080 This line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and is available for everyone.
South Australian Coronavirus Information Line (Government of South Australia)	1800 253 787 This line operates 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, 7 days a week and is available for everyone.
COVID-19 Disability Information Helpline (Australian Government Department of Social Services)	1800 643 787 This line operates Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (AEST).
COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line (Government of South Australis)	1800 632 753 This line operates 8.00am to 8.00 pm, 7 days a week.
COVID-19 Relief Call Centre (for personal hardship support)	1300 705 336 This line operates 8.00am to 8.00 pm, 7 days a week.
Autism SA	1300 288 476 This line operates Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm. You can also email us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admin@autismsa.org.au for general enquiries • mypathways@autismsa.org.au to speak to one of our My Pathways team members • COVID19@autismsa.org.au if you have COVID-19 related enquiries

What if I need support in other languages?

Call **131 450** for translating and interpreting services.

What about South Australian COVID-19 financial supports?

SA Health has a list of services that support you if you are affected by COVID-19. Go to [help and advice on COVID-19 for South Australians](#). You might be able to get some support such as:

- [SA COVID-19 Cluster Isolation Payment](#) – a single \$300 payment to provide financial support to workers in South Australia who are required to self-isolate because of a public health direction from SA Health and mandatory COVID-19 testing, and do not have access to paid leave or other income support
- [Paid Pandemic Leave payment](#) - Up to \$1500 for eligible persons who have been instructed to self-isolate or quarantine at home due to a public health direction or a positive COVID-19 test
- [COVID-19 Relief Call Centre](#) – phone 1300 705 336 for information and assistance, including access to personal hardship support and advice on short-term accommodation options if you cannot safely self-quarantine or self-isolate.

Autism SA does not provide financial advice to our clients, and community. We recommend you [contact the ATO directly](#).

What is the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

[Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) is a respiratory illness caused by a virus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause respiratory infections. These can range from the common cold to more serious diseases.

Symptoms of COVID-19?

COVID-19 can cause mild symptoms (some people have experienced no symptoms at all), but for some people, it can be more severe and can lead to pneumonia or breathing difficulties and can even be fatal.

Symptoms can include:

- fever OR chills (with no alternative illness that explains these symptoms)
- cough
- sore throat
- runny nose
- shortness of breath
- loss of taste or smell.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is mostly likely spread through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious (usually face to face contact for at least 15 minutes; or being in the same closed space for at least 2 hours)
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.



COVID-19 may also spread through touching objects or surfaces like doorknobs or tables, mobile phones, stair rails, elevator buttons that have droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person, and then touching your mouth, nose, eyes, or face.

For more information go to [SA Health COVID-19](#).

Where will I find COVID-19 information in languages other than English?

Go to the Australian Government Department of Health for a range of [COVID-19 fact sheets in international language translations](#).

Where can I find a simple explanation (easy read) of COVID-19?

Please speak to your Autism SA therapist or other staff member for a copy of our accessible resources.

Go to the Department of Social Services for a range of [accessible COVID-19 resources](#).

How do I protect myself and others from COVID-19?

To protect yourself and others and help [stop the spread](#) of coronavirus:

- Practice [good hygiene](#) like covering coughs and sneezes and wiping down surfaces.
- [Stay 1.5 metres apart](#) whenever and wherever you can.
- Wearing a [face mask](#) when you are in the community, or cannot stay 1.5 metres from other people in the community.
- Stay at home if you are unwell.
- [Get tested for COVID-19](#) as soon as [symptoms](#) appear, no matter how mild.
- SA Health recommends downloading the [COVIDSafe app](#)

If you have concerns about your health, contact your GP, visit the [SA Health COVID-19](#) webpage or call the SA COVID-19 Information Line on 1800 253 787 (9.00 am to 5.00 pm, 7 days a week).

What is social distancing or physical distancing?

Physical distancing (also called social distancing) means avoiding close contact and crowded places whenever you can and keeping 1.5 metres apart from those around you in the community, in the workplace and at home.

Physical distancing can help to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Some simple things that you can do to practice physical distancing include:

- Avoid hugging and kissing those not in your immediate family



- Swap handshakes for a wave
- Do virtual hi fives
- Turn face to face interactions into phone or video calls
- Working from home.

Go to the [SA Health social distancing](#) webpage for more information about social distancing.

What should I do if I feel unwell?

Use the Health Direct [COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#) to find out if you need to seek medical help.

Follow the latest advice from SA Health on [COVID-19 testing](#).

How do I know if I need to have a COVID-19 test?

Use the Health Direct [COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#) to find out if you need to get tested.

Visit the SA Health [Contact Tracing page](#) for information on who needs get tested.

What should I do if I have had a COVID-19 test and I am awaiting my test results?

ALL SOUTH AUSTRALIANS MUST FOLLOW THIS ADVICE.

If you do not you may face enforcement consequences from SA Police.

After your test, go straight home and [self-isolate](#) while you wait for your test result (which you should usually get within 2 days) and:

- stay at home
- wash your hands often with soap and water
- cough and sneeze into a clean tissue or your elbow
- avoid close contact with others, including members of your household
- If you do not receive a text or phone call after 3 days it is advised to contact your local GP

What should I do if I have had a COVID-19 test and it is negative?

Follow medical advice.

If you are still unwell you should stay home and not go to school or work until you are well.

If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 you will need to remain in self-isolation even if your test result was negative.



What should I do if I have had a COVID-19 test and it is positive?

Follow medical advice.

If you have a [positive test result](#) for COVID-19 (and don't need to be in hospital), you must stay in self-isolation until you are cleared by SA Health to leave self-isolation.

What should I do if I have had close contact with someone with (or with suspected) COVID-19 or who is waiting for their test result?

Call the SA Health COVID-19 Information Line **1800 253 787** for the best way to protect yourself and others.

People who have been advised by SA Health that they are a close contact or a casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case must stay in self-isolation until the date provided to them by the Communicable Disease Control Branch.

What should I do if I am worried but feel well?

Use the Health Direct [COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#) to find out if you need to seek medical help or call the COVID-19 information hotline on **1800 253 787**.

Call the COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line on **1800 632 753** (8.00am to 8.00 pm, 7 days a week) or go to [COVID-19 mental health support](#).

Talk to family and friends or seek professional advice.

It's normal to feel stress and worry when there is a health event happening in the community that is affecting people's wellbeing.

It is very important that we look out for each other. Your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your family should be first and foremost.

What should I do if I, or someone in my house, has recently returned from interstate or overseas?

As the situation can change rapidly you should check the latest [travel advice](#).

What do I do if I need to travel?

As the situation can change rapidly you should check the latest [travel advice](#).

Do I need to wear a mask?

If you need to go out into the community and cannot socially distance you are strongly encouraged to wear a mask.

Face masks are an additional physical barrier and help to stop the spread of COVID-19. Wear a mask if you cannot maintain a minimum of 1.5m distance between you and others.

You don't need to wear a mask in your home, but if you have people coming to your home to support you they may be wearing a mask. You can wear a mask too while they are in your home to keep you safe.

Go to the SA Health webpage [Face Masks](#) for more information.

Who should we rely on for official information, advice, and alerts?

You should only access COVID-19 related information from a reliable source. At Autism SA we take our advice from:



- ◆ Federal [Department of Health](#)
- ◆ [SA Health](#)
- ◆ Government of South Australia [sa.gov.au COVID-19](#)
- ◆ [Safework SA](#)

If you need information or advice on COVID-19 at Autism SA, you can email our dedicated feedback team directly on covid19@autismsa.org.au.

Do I need to install the COVIDSafe App?

It is recommended by the Federal Government that all Australians have the COVID-Safe app.

This helps with [contact tracing](#) and is something you can do to protect you, your family and friends, clients and colleagues.

For more information go to the [COVIDSafe app page](#).

Autism SA's response to, and actions during the COVID-19 pandemic

What is Autism SA doing about COVID-19?

Autism SA is continuously adapting throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We are evolving our services, form and accessibility of our supports, policy, procedures and will continue to provide services and supports to you, within allowable restrictions.

We aim to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of our clients, staff and the wider community
- continue to serve our clients and community to the highest standards within current state restrictions
- ensure we comply with state restrictions and guidelines to slow the spread of COVID-19 so that people can continue to get the care and support they need.

Autism SA works within stringent quality and safeguards systems. We have:



- procedures to manage pandemics, maintain infection control standards and support our staff and clients.
- a COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current best practice.
- a COVID-19 Taskforce that meets regularly to stay informed, enable service continuity and providing guidance to our staff, clients, and community.

Will Autism SA be continuing to provide services and supports during COVID-19?

Continuity of our life-changing services and supports has never been more important to our autism community. For us it is business as usual, unless constrained by a government restriction. In the event of this we will continue to provide timely updates to you on the services and supports that we are allowed to provide.

If you have questions about this you can call 1300 288 476 or email us via COVID19@autismsa.org.au.

Are Autism SA staff essential workers?

As at 12:01am 19 November 2020, an essential service includes care services for people with particular needs because of homelessness, age, infirmity, disability, illness or chronic health condition illness.

Essential workers are people who perform work within an organisation or business that the State Government says is essential under current restrictions.

Autism SA can continue to provide some care and support services to our clients, ensuring we also meet any current state restrictions and that you and our workforce are safe.

Contact your friendly Autism SA staff member if you would like more information on the services and supports that we are providing within current restrictions. Or you can call Autism SA on 1300 288 476.

How will Autism SA communicate with me?

Our Chief Executive Officer, Jenny Karavolos, is communicating on behalf of Autism SA with our clients, families, and the wider autism community. She is also speaking with other providers, government and stakeholders so we can keep up to date with important news to share with you.

Autism SA is keeping in touch with our clients and community during these challenging times, so you may receive phone calls, text messages or emails from us over the next few weeks providing you with information specifically relating to the supports and services that you access.

We will keep in touch with you through:

- phone calls
- text messages
- video calls
- emails directly to you
- our website <https://www.autismsa.org.au/>
- social media, such as Facebook.



Why does Autism SA ask me questions about my health or where I have been?

In some situations we need to ask you some questions to make sure we are stopping the spread of COVID-19. This helps to keep you and our staff safe. We use a Health Screening form if you are coming onto an Autism SA site.

If you have questions about this you can call 1300 288 476 or email us COVID19@autismsa.org.au.

Sometimes we might have to postpone some of our services to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Other options for services will be discussed with you if this occurs.

We are also open to hearing and attempting to accommodate different services and supports that would be of value to you. Please email us at COVID19@autismsa.org.au.

What about Autism SA in schools?

We work closely with the Department for Education about Autism SA services that can be provided in schools. We continue to modify our service delivery options, within current state restrictions so that we can be accessible to you whether that is in the school, at home, remotely via teleconference, telehealth, video or other means to students and/or teachers.

Go to the Department for Education for their [latest information](#) and please contact your Autism SA Pathways Team on 1300 288 476.

How do I know Autism SA sites are clean and safe?

As part of our efforts to maintain safe premises we are taking extra measures to ensure that all premises are being cleaned and sanitised appropriately.

Our cleaners are placing an extra focus on cleaning and sanitising high-touch points such as lift, doors, door handles, benches and desks, toys and equipment, entry and exit buttons.

When offices are open, we conduct daily cleans.

If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 on any of our premises the site will be closed for a prescribed deep clean.

Our visitors are required to answer some Health Check questions and apply hand sanitiser before attending their session/appointment at an Autism SA premises. Our workforce are trained in hygiene and sanitisation, and follow processes for the use of areas and equipment every day.

How does Autism SA clean toys, tactile and sensory items?

Routine cleaning is the key to maintaining a safe environment for our clients and staff. Cleaning removes dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water or alcohol wipes/sprays.

Routine cleaning

We clean and disinfect spaces and equipment after each use. We clean with hot, soapy water (using dishwashing detergent) because this has been advised as the best way of cleaning. We rinse well after cleaning. We only use antibacterial wipes if there is no visible soiling. Sometimes we soak our toys in a bucket of water with Milton Antibacterial Tablets.



We have removed and/or minimised the use of toys and equipment that cannot be cleaned, e.g. Kinetic Sand and Playdoh (single-use only).

We do not share toys between groups unless they are sanitised before being moved from one group to the other.

Is the Autism SA Library still open?

Our library will be operational within [current state guidelines](#).

Physical library items, such as books, DVDs, and resources, are not available at present due to our annual closure and stocktake. We will re-open for borrowing on Monday 11 January 2021.

Have you tried our electronic resources? E-books and other e-resources are available for registered clients, their families or carers and Autism SA members. To sign up for borrowing please [click here](#).

If you have questions about this you can call 1300 288 476 or email us COVID19@autismsa.org.au.

Where can I send my good ideas to help Autism SA during COVID-19?

Ideas and suggestions that we have received during COVID-19 have been fantastic and our workforce and community has really benefited from these initiatives.

If you have a good ideas, feedback or queries please email covid19@autismsa.org.au.

What about Autism SA's volunteers and students?

Volunteers and students will be subject to the same health and wellbeing directives as our employed workforce.

We would like to thank our amazing volunteers and students for the valuable contribution they provide to our organisation. As a valued part of our community we will continue to stay connected with you so that we can develop our volunteering and student placement activities.

What is the NDIS doing in response to COVID-19?

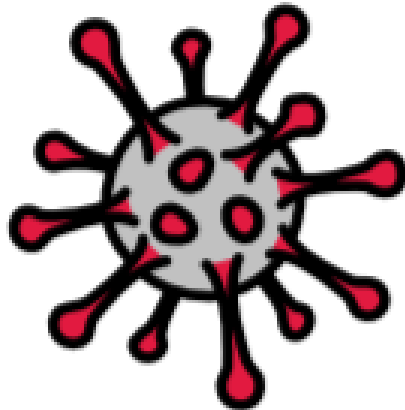
The NDIS recognises that many changes and accommodations need to be made to provide continuity of services and supports for participants during this time. They are updating these frequently.

Autism SA and our partners such as the state's [National Disability Services](#) (NDS) and the [Department for Human Services](#) (DHS) are talking with the [National Disability Insurance Agency](#) (NDIA) to request additional supports for South Australian participants and providers over this time.

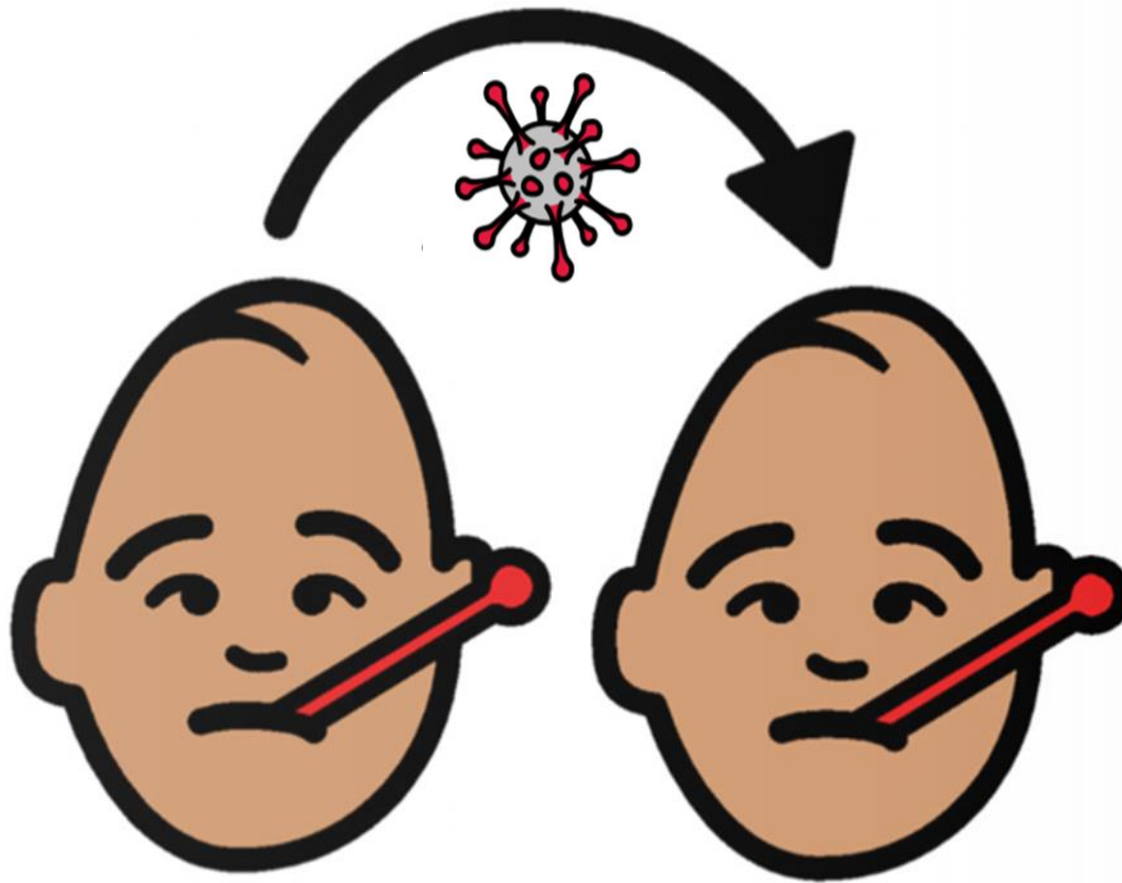
Visit the [NDIS Coronavirus Update](#) page for the latest news and the additional supports that people may be eligible for, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions about this you can call 1300 288 476 or email our excellent Autism SA [Pathways Team](#).

A Story about Coronavirus in South Australia.



Coronavirus is also called COVID or COVID-19.
It is a virus that can be passed from person to person.



Coronavirus can make people feel sick.

People that have Coronavirus might get a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or a fever. Some people can get very sick and need to go to hospital.



cough



sore throat



short of
breath



feel hot

It is important that if you feel sick, that you get tested for Coronavirus.

I can help stop the spread of germs by washing my hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If I go out, I can use Hand Sanitizer before I touch things.



If you leave your home and you cannot stay 1.5 metres away from other people, it is a smart idea to wear a mask.

When you wear a mask, it should cover your nose, mouth and chin.

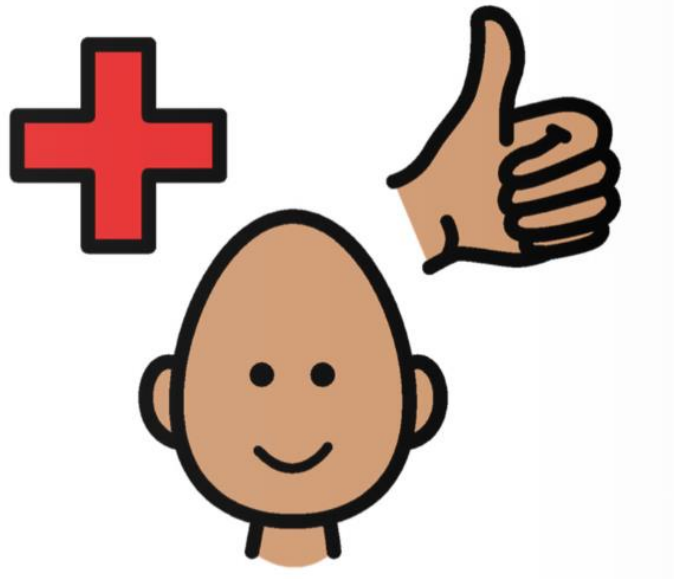


Masks help to keep everyone safe.

The rules change. My family and support workers will help me to stay safe and help me to follow the rules.



If we all follow the rules, it helps to keep everyone safe.





For more information on COVID visit the SA Health Website:

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/>

For more information on Autism SA supports and services,
email mypathways@autismsa.org.au or phone 1300 autism

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