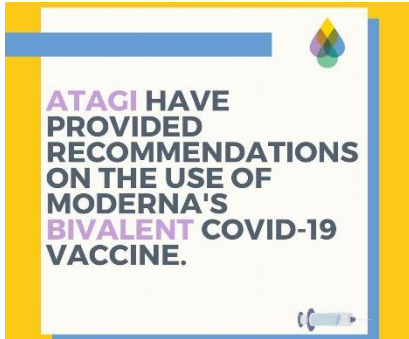


Community Engagement Noticeboard

29 September 2022

Latest updates on the COVID-19 pandemic



Moderna bivalent vaccine approved as a booster dose

- [ATAGI](#) has approved the Moderna bivalent vaccine as an alternative vaccine for any booster dose in people aged 18 years or older.
- This vaccine provides cover for the original 2020 strain and the Omicron variant BA.1.
- Both the new bivalent and the original vaccines provide significant protection from severe disease against Omicron subvariant infections.
- The first doses will be available from 10 October 2022.



Face masks still strongly recommended

- From 23 September, face masks are no longer required on public transport or in taxis, rideshare services or tourism vehicles and will instead be strongly recommended.
- Face masks are still required when visiting a hospital, care facility or any other healthcare setting.
- Face masks remain a low-cost and highly effective tool to help reduce transmission and protect those most at-risk.
- People are strongly encouraged to wear a mask in indoor settings, in situations where people can't physically distance, for people who have any COVID symptoms and for anyone who may be immunocompromised or vulnerable to COVID.
- [Click here](#) for more information on mask requirements.



Ventilation a key strategy to prevent transmission

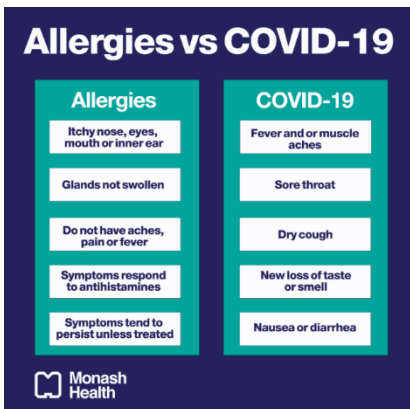
- COVID-19 is airborne and it spreads when a person breathes out very small droplets or aerosols that contain the virus. Adding fresh air into a space reduces the risk of transmission.
- Bringing outdoor air into your home is the simplest way to achieve good ventilation. Whenever you can, open doors and windows to bring outdoor air in.
- Portable air cleaners, such as purifiers, use filters to remove aerosol particles and other contaminants and release clean air.
- [Click here](#) for more information on improving ventilation.

Protecting yourself from other health hazards



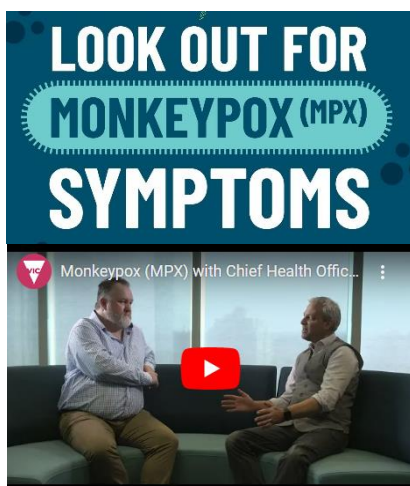
Hay Fever Tips

- Spring may be one of the most beautiful times of the year, but the season can also be a difficult time for many hay fever sufferers.
- Allergic Rhinitis (commonly known as hay fever) affects nearly 20% of people in Australia. In Victoria, hay fever is mainly caused by the nose and or eyes coming into contact with environmental allergens such as pollens, dust mites and material shed from animal fur, hair or feathers.
- During springtime, you can be at risk for thunderstorm asthma if you suffer from hay fever and asthma. If you're vulnerable to asthma, it's recommended you see a doctor and have an appropriate asthma action plan in place and rescue medications on hand.
- [Watch our new video](#) to hear from our allergy team on some tips you can use to help control your hay fever symptoms.
- The University of Melbourne offers a service called [Melbourne Pollen](#) that forecasts the level of grass pollen and several other types of pollen in the air.



Allergies vs COVID

- COVID-19 and seasonal allergies have many similar signs and symptoms such as a runny nose. Understanding the differences in symptoms is important to ensure they are treated effectively.
- Check out our symptom checklist (left) to identify your symptoms and help determine what health issue you may be suffering from.
- It's important to consider whether your symptoms are the same as what you typically experience with seasonal allergies such as hay fever.
- If in doubt, please take a COVID Rapid Antigen Test (RAT).
- If symptoms worsen, please take a RAT or a PCR Test.



Monkeypox prevention measures are working

- As of 28 September 2022, there have been 67 cases of monkeypox recorded in Victoria. Active cases are currently at 2. Read Chief Health Officer, Brett Sutton's response to the progress [here](#).
- Monkeypox can still affect anyone. It is spread mostly through skin-to-skin contact with someone who has monkeypox. The current outbreak is mostly affecting gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.
- Monkeypox causes flu-like symptoms and a distinctive skin rash or lesions. Most people recover within a few weeks.
- CEO of [Thorne Harbour Health](#), Simon Ruth, and the Chief Health Officer of Victoria, Brett Sutton, sat down this week to discuss five things you can do to keep safe from MPX. Check out the [video here](#).
- Find more information on monkeypox and vaccine eligibility [HERE](#).

Changes and opportunities for COVID-19 vaccinations



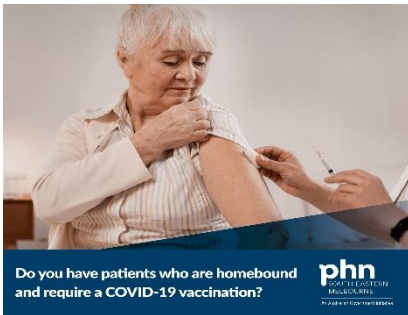
Local state-run clinics to close from October 1, 2022

- **Dandenong Plaza Vaccination Clinic** and **Frankston Vaccination Clinic** at Bayside Shopping Centre will be closing at the end of September as the vaccination program moves increasingly to GP clinics and pharmacies.
- We express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to our partners **EACH** and **Peninsula Health** respectively, for your tireless dedication to keeping our communities protected through the pandemic.



Monash Health Vaccination Bus to continue in 2022

- The bus will be available at least until the end of the year to provide pop-ups throughout the week and at weekend events to communities most at risk who may have barriers to engaging GPs and pharmacies.
- To request a pop-up vaccination clinic or education session please complete the [expression of interest form](#), and we will be in touch to discuss.



In-Home vaccinations available for housebound residents

- South East Melbourne Public Health Network (SEMPHN) are accepting referrals for home visits within the SEMPHN catchment to vaccinate people who cannot leave the home to receive a COVID 19 vaccination.
- This may include the frail aged and elderly, and people living with a disability or a mental health condition which prevents them from leaving their home.
- [Request an in-home vaccination here](#)



Keep up with your vaccinations any way you can!

- Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton has warned that even though cases have dropped significantly, other peaks are on their way. It's vital to protect yourself ahead of time. Vaccination is the best form of protection against COVID-19. Read his latest advice [here](#).
- It's easy to choose a vaccination option using the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) for yourself or someone else. You can compare clinics, check availability and book an appointment in one place, with or without Medicare.
- Or have [EVA](#) find a clinic for you! Available every day from 7am to 10pm.

Other important news, links, resources and funding opportunities

- [2021 Census infographics on your local govt area](#)
- [True or false? COVID FactCheckers local & abroad](#)
- [Pandemic Leave Disaster payments to stay](#)
- [Do you need medical care or advice? poster](#)
- [Victorians invited to have a say on disability inclusion](#)
- The [COVID-19 Multicultural Community Grants Program](#) offers grants up to \$50,000 to eligible not-for-profit organisations to support priority groups to protect themselves from COVID-19. Projects must be completed by **31 December**. [Applications close on October 3.](#)