Staying Safe Online
Covid-19 edition

If you are limiting face-to-face contact, self-isolating or in quarantine due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, it is important to make sure you can access reliable information, stay connected with friends and family and shop online for what you need. This is a difficult time for many Australians, but these tips will help you stay informed while being safer and more confident online.

How to monitor the situation

Keeping up to date with information from reliable, reputable sources may help to ease feelings of uncertainty and fear. The Australian government has a range of resources available, providing the latest information and advice on the changing situation. Visit **australia.gov.au**.

If you have a smart device, you can download the Australian government coronavirus app (from Apple App store or Google Play store) or join the Australian government WhatsApp channel **oz.gov.au/whatsapp**.

If at any time you are unsure about what to do or cannot find the information you are looking for, call the coronavirus information line on 1800 020 080.

How to stay connected online

Although you may be unable to join in community events or gatherings with loved ones during the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to stay in touch with family and friends to help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Video calling and messaging on social media services is a great way to stay connected. Schedule a regular time to video call or send messages to each other at any time throughout the day.

Visit the Be Connected website at **beconnected.esafety.gov.au** for free online courses to help you learn how to safely use video calling and social media.

Learn how to:

- **Make video calls**
- **Use popular social media services**
- **Use Facebook**

You can also join one of our free online safety presentations about video calling or Staying safe on Facebook:

beconnected.esafety.gov.au/bookings#connecting-to-others

beconnected.esafety.gov.au/bookings#fb

Australian Government

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This program has been developed by eSafety as part of the Be Connected initiative.

esafety.gov.au

Online shopping tips and advice

If you are self-isolating or have restricted mobility, shopping online can help to ensure you have access to the supplies you need while staying safe at home. It is always best to shop on secure Australian websites, and with brands and established stores you know and recognise. Here are some things you can do to keep safe:

- Look out for 'https://' [https://] in the website address and a closed padlock icon (🔒) in the top left-hand corner of the screen. This means your information and payment details will be encrypted so your personal data is protected from prying eyes and identity thieves.
- Check the website address. An address ending in .com.au means the site is Australian, and linked to an Australian business.
- Check the company ABN or ACN on the Australian Business Register at abr.gov.au to ensure it is a genuine business.
- Search for online reviews by typing the name of the store and 'reviews' into a search engine like Google. The reviews will give you some idea of the store's reliability, pricing and other issues.
- If possible, use PayPal or a credit card to pay for your goods. Payment by these methods offers more security as any unexpected charges can be disputed through your bank or PayPal.

Priority shopping at Supermarkets

Both Coles and Woolworths are offering a dedicated 'Community Hour' from 7am – 8am Monday to Friday for older and more vulnerable members of the community. This helps to ensure a safer shopping environment before trade opens to the wider community.

These hours may change as the coronavirus situation develops, so check the store website for the most up-to-date details.

Woolworths is providing a priority assistance service for members of the community who are unable to shop in store. Eligible customers include older Australians, people with a disability, and those who are immuno-compromised or who are required to self-isolate.

Register for priority assistance at woolworths.com.au/shop/discover/priorityassistance.

Woolworths has also opened 700 community pick-up locations to enable eligible priority assistance customers to place an order online and have someone pick up and deliver the order on their behalf.

Coles is offering an online priority service to eligible customers who are unable to shop in store. For information on eligibility criteria and location details call Coles online shopping on 1800 455 400. Alternatively, visit the Coles website coles.com.au/customernotice/onlinepriorityservice.

There is a large demand for essential grocery items so remember to plan ahead when doing your shopping and be aware that some items may not be available online. It is a good idea to check if other stores in your local area, such as fruit and veg shops, bakeries and pharmacies, are also offering online shopping services.

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Meal Services and delivery options

Restaurant delivery services such as Deliveroo, Menulog and Uber Eats pick up and deliver food from restaurants in your local area. These services will require you to download the App from the Apple App store or Google Play store. You will need to enter some personal details to open an account. These include your name, email address, home address for deliveries, and credit card details for payment.

Restaurant meals are usually delivered within the hour, but this may take longer at peak times.

You can also order meal delivery services such as Hello Fresh and Marley Spoon. These services offer weekly subscriptions to deliver a set number of recipe cards and the food required to prepare each meal. Order these online at hellofresh.com.au, marleyspoon.com.au.

Coronavirus Scams

Unfortunately, at times like this it is important to be aware that there are scammers trying to take advantage of the spread of coronavirus to exploit the fears and anxiety of Australian consumers, or appeal to your generosity for their own gain. Scams may look and sound real, but the more you know about them the easier they are to spot.

Common types of Coronavirus scams

- Phishing emails and phone calls impersonate official agencies, such as the World Health Organisation, government authorities, or legitimate businesses such as banks and phone companies.
- Misinformation about the coronavirus is also being sent by text, on social media or via email.
- Some shopping sites are trying to sell fake vaccines or cures for coronavirus.
- Investment scams try to get people to send them money by claiming coronavirus has created new opportunities.

How to protect yourself

Even though you may be experiencing feelings of fear and anxiety due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to take your time, re-read what you have received and do not feel pressured.

- Do not click on links in emails or messages, or open attachments from people or organisations you do not know.
- Before you click a link, hover over it to see if the web address looks genuine.
- Be careful of fake online shopping sites requesting unusual payment methods. Always pay online with credit card or PayPal.
- The best way to detect a fake trader or social media shopping scam is to search for reviews before purchasing.

The Be Connected website offers free online courses to help you learn more about how to avoid scams and tricks:

beconnected.esafety.gov.au/topic-library/essentials/safety-first/avoiding-scams-and-tricks

You can also join one of our free online presentations about how to spot a scam, and how to protect yourself against scams:

beconnected.esafety.gov.au/bookings#spot-a-scam

beconnected.esafety.gov.au/bookings#protect-yourself-against-scams

For the most up-to-date information on coronavirus scams visit the ACCC Scamwatch website:

scamwatch.gov.au/covid19

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Help, I suspect I'm being scammed

If you think you have been the victim of a scam, don't be embarrassed and don't keep it to yourself. There are steps you can take to fix the problem:

- Contact your financial institution to stop any further payments to the scammer.
- Contact ID Care **idcare.org** if your personal information has been compromised or misused.
- Report to ACCC Scamwatch to help raise awareness in the community **scamwatch.gov.au**

Australian Government | **Be Connected**
Every Australian online.

Take the time to discover Be Connected

Be Connected is a comprehensive website with free resources specifically designed to support older Australians to connect online safely and navigate the digital world confidently. The site is also useful for families and community organisations who want to help older community members access all the benefits of the internet.

beconnected.esafety.gov.au

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