Coronavirus is serious and it’s spreading.

It may not be obvious if someone has been infected with coronavirus.

Most people experience mild to moderate symptoms, which can feel like the flu or a really bad cold, or like opioid withdrawal. Common symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing and fatigue. Symptoms show up between 2 and 14 days after exposure, although some people only experience very minor or no obvious symptoms at all.

It is important to be aware that:

If you drink alcohol or use drugs regularly, you may be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 and of experiencing it more severely than the general population.

If you smoke you may also be at greater risk.

Your risk is also increased if you have an underlying health condition such as heart disease, lung diseases (e.g. asthma or COPD), diabetes, HIV-AIDS, are immunocompromised, or if you are over 60 years of age.

It is important to be aware that:

If you have one or more of these conditions – or live or spend significant time with someone who does – it is advised that you minimise physical contact with others immediately.
Here are some other practical things that you can do to minimise the spread of the disease.

**Wash hands regularly.** Especially before and after using drugs, handling money or injecting equipment, being in contact with other people, or being in public spaces. Wash with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser, if soap and water is not available, or swabs which can be obtained from a Needle and Syringe Program (NSP).

**Don’t share ANY injecting equipment,** pipes, bongs, joints, straws / banknotes etc for snorting.

**Prepare your own drugs.** You should avoid handling or touching other people’s drugs and equipment, and stop other people from touching yours.

**Wipe down drug packages,** wraps and surfaces with swabs and/or concentrated alcohol-based cleaners (60% or more alcohol is good). Avoid putting drug bags or wraps in your mouth, vagina or anus.

**Be prepared for drug shortages,** especially if your supplier/s get sick. Recommend having a backup plan by stocking all necessary drug using equipment, medications, food and drinks, especially if you begin to go into withdrawal.

**Stay home if you are sick,** or if you don’t have a place to stay, try to avoid close contact with others. If having sex or doing sex work, you should avoid kissing and sharing bodily fluids. Use condoms.

If continuing to use opioids like heroin, oxycodone or morphine, you should have naloxone. Don’t use alone, but try to find somewhere quiet but not totally isolated. If you drop, will someone find you?

If you are dependent on opioids, consider if now is the time to request opioid treatment like buprenorphine or methadone. Contact an Alcohol and Drug Service or NSP for advice.

If you are already on opioid treatment, talk to your doctor or alcohol and drug service about how to maintain access to your medication, especially in the event that you are infected, quarantined or directed to self-isolate by authorities.

**Remember! Now is a great time to cut back or quit smoking.**

People who smoke are at higher risk of respiratory complications if they do become infected with the virus. Call Quitline on 13 78 48 or visit quithq.initiatives.qld.gov.au

Remember that Queenslanders can call Adis 24/7 Alcohol and Drug Support for counselling, information and advice at anytime on 1800 177 833 or by visiting www.adis.health.qld.gov.au

Adis also has useful service information and advice for family, friends and health professionals.

For more detailed information on COVID-19 check out the Qld Health website here: www.health.qld.gov.au/coronavirus

If you are concerned you can also call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)