



Safety Note

Updated: 1 April 2020

Physical distancing in cafes and general eating areas – reducing the transmission of COVID-19

What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people.

Why is it important?

Physical distancing is important because COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

So, the more space between you and others, the harder it is for the virus to spread.

What you should do?

If you are sick, stay away from others and stay at home – that is the most important thing you can do. You should also practise good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, before and after eating, after going to the toilet and after sharing items.
- Cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

As well as these, you can start a range of physical distancing and hygiene actions now.

- Avoid close contact with others (i.e. stay more than 1.5 metres away from people).
- Ensure that all indoor areas contain less than 100 people and each person has 4sqm of space.

These simple, common sense actions help reduce risk to you and to others. They will help to slow the spread of disease in the community – and you can use them every day.

Principles of physical distancing while attending cafes and general eating areas:

- Firstly - stay at home if you are sick
- Practise reasonable physical distancing which, in this case, means avoiding unnecessary close contact with others, attempting to keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres between people when you are on university sites.
- Reduce other opportunities for direct transmission e.g. sharing items, unnecessary touching.



- Ensure impeccable personal hygiene practices.

Recommendations / Actions

1. Most importantly, stay home if you feel ill.
2. Consider spacing within the physical environment, ensuring each person has at least 4sqm of space. Maintain 1.5 meters between you and others such as when queueing to collect or order food.
3. Take your food and/or drink outside rather than in the communal eating areas. Enjoy your lunch outside!
4. Avoid sharing equipment as the virus can live on surfaces including tabletops, utensils, etc.
5. Limit food handling and the sharing of food.
6. Avoid cash handling as much as possible - Use tap and pay.
7. Try not to take straws or utensils from the communal area – bring your own if possible.
8. Attempt to stagger when you buy food or beverages – wait until quieter times rather than peak periods.
9. Regularly wash your hands before and after eating and after going to the toilet as a minimum.
10. Avoid queuing at coffee shops or food outlets – use the apps to pre-order.
11. Dispose of tissues and rubbish immediately in the general waste bin, don't leave rubbish on tables.
12. Stop the practice of handshaking as a greeting.
13. Avoid touching your face with your fingers.
14. Have good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene and use hand sanitisers and soap and water often.

Resource and links

[Australian Government: Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Information on social distancing](#)

[Australian Government: Resources](#)