

Ministers

Department of Health and Aged Care

This content relates to a former minister

Additional border security measures to protect Australians from the new 'Omicron' COVID-19 variant

On the basis of medical advice provided by the Chief Medical Officer of Australia, Professor Paul Kelly, the Australian Government will implement additional border security measures as a precaution to protect Australians from the new Omicron variant of concern.

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These actions are taken on the basis of prevention and are considered proportionate to the risk and consistent with actions being considered by other countries.

1. Effective immediately, anyone who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia, or their immediate family including parents of citizens, and who have been in African countries where the Omicron variant has been detected and spread – within the past 14 days – will not be able to enter Australia.
The countries are: South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Seychelles, Malawi and Mozambique.
2. Australian citizens and permanent residents, immediate family members including parents arriving from these countries will need to go into immediate supervised quarantine for 14 days subject to jurisdictional arrangements.
3. Anyone who has already arrived in Australia and who has been in any of the nine countries within the past 14 days must immediately isolate themselves and get tested for COVID-19 and follow jurisdictional quarantine requirements which will include quarantine for 14 days from the time of departure from southern Africa.
4. These restrictions also apply to people, for instance international students and skilled migrants, arriving from the safe travel zones we have established with New Zealand, Singapore, Japan and Republic of Korea, who have been in any of the nine countries within the past 14 days.
5. The Government will suspend all flights from the nine southern African countries for a period of 14 days as a matter of precaution.

The World Health Organization has declared the B.1.1.529 strain of the virus, now known as the Omicron strain, to be a variant of concern. It was first detected in southern African countries.

The Omicron variant has a high number of mutations within its spike protein, which is particularly concerning.

There are currently no known cases of the Omicron variant in Australia.

The actions taken by the Australian Government to date are precautionary and will remain so until more is known about the severity and transmissibility of the new variant.

The emergence of the Omicron variant is another reason any eligible person in Australia who is not yet vaccinated against COVID-19 should make an appointment – today – to get vaccinated. If you have completed your two-dose primary course of vaccination at least six months ago and haven't yet had a booster dose, make a booking for the booster now.

People should also continue to practise COVIDSafe measures, including good hand washing and cough and sneeze hygiene and get tested if they have any symptoms of COVID-19.

These new measures were implemented on the recommendations of Australia's Chief Medical Officer which was informed by a comprehensive risk assessment. The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) is aware and actively engaged in discussions.

Australians can be reassured the Australian Government, as it has done throughout the pandemic, is acting on the best medical advice available. If further actions are required the Government will not hesitate to take these actions.

The AHPPC is following international developments very closely and will continue to advise the Government on how to respond to the Omicron variant.

Australians are urged to get their COVID-19 information from trusted sources, such as the Australia.gov.au [website](#).

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