



MEDIA RELEASE
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SAFE TO KEEP SEEING YOUR DERMATOLOGIST DURING COVID-19

The [Australasian College of Dermatologists \(ACD\)](#) is reminding people with skin conditions and skin cancers to continue to see their dermatologist for timely and accurate diagnosis and ongoing management.

ACD President, Associate Professor David Francis, says “While COVID-19 is rightly front and centre in all our minds, it’s vitally important that fears and concerns over COVID-19 do not make people deprioritise their everyday health.”

To respond to the COVID-19 situation, dermatologists have adapted their practices to provide a safe environment for patients. Many are providing care to their patients via telehealth, using phone or videoconferencing.

Most dermatology practices around Australia remain open and are continuing to provide quality specialist dermatological care.

The College is closely monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and has developed an up-to-date web resource with guidance and information for patients and dermatologists.

Providing a safe environment for face-to-face consultations

Associate Professor Francis says “Social distancing has been essential to control the spread of COVID-19. For those patients requiring ongoing dermatology care, a visit to your dermatologist is important and can continue.”

“Australia’s dermatologists have adapted quickly and sensibly to the challenges that COVID-19 has created.”

Dermatologists are contacting high-risk patients and are using telehealth to triage patients to see if they need a face-to-face consultation and to treat those for whom a telehealth consultation is sufficient.

If patients do need an in-person visit, strict infection control measures have been deployed including limiting the number of people in the waiting and consultation rooms, spacing chairs 1.5 metres apart or encouraging patients to wait in their cars.

Already rigorous hygiene practices have been intensified. Patients with potential COVID-19 symptoms are being directed not to attend practices but to phone instead.

Associate Professor Francis says “Dermatology practices are doing everything they can to ensure that the chances of coming into contact with the virus are extremely low.

“If you notice a change in your own or a family member’s skin health, don’t put off seeking medical advice.



“Whether in person, or through expanded telehealth services, it is critical that you continue to manage your skin health throughout the COVID-19 health emergency.”

In addition to providing up-to-date, best practice guidance to dermatology Fellows and trainees, the ACD’s [COVID-19 webpages](#) provide information [for dermatology patients and the community](#) on what COVID-19 means for their ongoing treatment and care. This includes dedicated resources for patients on immunosuppressants and biologics, for people with eczema and about telehealth.

Skin checks

We know that social distancing restrictions currently in place have led many people to cancel or postpone their regular skin check. Melanoma alone kills 1,700 Australians per year with 14,000 diagnosed. Early diagnosis and treatment is critical and it is extremely important that we do not let COVID-19 provide an opportunity for melanoma to take yet more lives.

Associate Professor Francis says “The COVID-19 fear is understandable, but for some people it could mean that an aggressive skin cancer will go undetected. We don’t want people to develop skin cancers which could have been easily treated if picked up early.”

If you have a concerning spot or lesion on your skin, make an appointment with your GP who may refer you to a dermatologist. The consequences of not seeing your GP or dermatologist for a skin check could be life-threatening for certain patients. If you have a regular follow up appointment booked with your dermatologist, please contact their practice or clinic to see if this can be carried out using a telehealth consultation (by telephone or video call), or if you need to see your dermatologist for a face-to-face consultation.

Chronic skin conditions

People with existing skin conditions need to continue seeing their dermatologist, in person or via telehealth.

“The failure to be able to monitor patients with existing conditions could lead to their conditions getting worse. If some conditions, such as eczema or psoriasis are not well controlled, patients can end up with infections or unplanned visits to hospitals”, says Associate Professor Francis.

If you are taking regular medication for management of a chronic skin condition, including immunosuppressive or biologic medications, you should continue to take your medication. If you stop taking your medication you may have a flare of your disease which may increase the risk of complications. If you have concerns, contact your dermatologist to discuss the risks and benefits.

If you run out of medication, please contact your dermatologist to see if a repeat prescription is appropriate. To further stop the spread of COVID-19, you can now have any PBS medicines delivered to your home through your pharmacy of choice through the Australian Government’s “COVID-19 Home Medicines Service”. There is no additional cost to have these medicines delivered to your home.

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Links to further information

[ACD COVID-19 updates](#) with information for patients and community.

[A-Z of Skin](#)

[Find a local dermatologist](#)

For further information on the ACD, visit www.dermcoll.edu.au, or see our updates on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or Twitter at [@DermatologyACD](#)

About the Australasian College of Dermatologists:

The Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD) is the sole medical college accredited by the Australian Medical Council for the training and continuing professional development of medical practitioners in the specialty of dermatology. As the national peak membership organisation, the College represents over 550 specialist dermatologist Fellows (FACD) and 100 trainees across the country.

ACD is the leading authority in Australia for dermatology, providing information, advocacy and advice to individuals, communities, government and other health stakeholders on skin health and dermatological practice.

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