

“Our advice for school holidays is to be very mindful of the current restrictions in the current situation in Victoria,” she said.

There is a reason we decreased the limit of people into households [and outdoors] to five and 10 respectively.

“So we ask residents of Victoria to really think about whether they need to undertake frequent social events, either between extended family groups or social groups.

“This is the thing that is driving transmission at the moment. So we really need people to go back to that activity that they were undertaking in April with physical distancing, with hand hygiene, staying at home if you’re unwell or you have symptoms, getting tested if you have symptoms.

“And really thinking about whether you really, really need to have so many gatherings and really trying to minimise those gatherings.”

#### TESTING IN HOT SPOTS NOT COMPULSORY

Dr Van Dieman said it wasn’t mandatory for every person living in a coronavirus hot spot to be tested.

“At the moment we don’t require people who have no symptoms to self isolate until they get results but we absolutely require anybody who has symptoms to stay at home both until they get results, not just until they get results, but until they are completely recovered,” she said.

“I believe that not everybody who has been offered testing has taken it up.

“It is disappointing. We would like everybody to get tested in those areas.

“We would like to really emphasise the message that it is important to get tested and important for us to find every case in those areas.

“We understand why people might have reservations but we are trying to make it is absolutely easy for everybody possible to get tested.

“At the moment, there are no restrictions on people from hotspots moving around the state. “There is no restriction on them. We do have to remember we have hotspots.

“The overall baseline proportion of cases in Victoria is still very low.

“The chance that anyone in these hotspots has COVID is low, but our message is not about specific individuals from hot spots, it’s about the behaviour of the population at large, not going out if you are sick, getting tested and maintaining physical distancing and hand hygiene wherever you are.

“We are not at the point where we’re going to mandate that people wear masks in public.”

#### FAMILY CLUSTERS CONTINUE TO GROW

A total of 19 cases have been linked to the Keilor Downs family outbreak.

One new case has been linked to a family outbreak in Coburg, bringing the total number of cases in the cluster to 15.

Three new cases today and two existing cases have been linked to a North Melbourne family cluster, bringing the total number of cases to 15.

Dr Van Dieman said there were “quite a reasonable number” of active clusters in Victoria.

Dr Van Dieman said the health department was working closely with Coles after two workers at a Laverton distribution centre tested positive.

“One of those cases is very clearly linked to a large outbreak, that second Keilor Downs outbreak, so we do have a very clear source of acquisition for that,” Dr Van Dieman said.

“Nonetheless, all of the close contacts identified are in quarantine.

“A further cohort of staff is in quarantine. [They] are not close contacts but they have worked shifts with these staff members, albeit at very large distances because it is a very large workplace.

“But we are taking no chances and those staff members are literally just going to work and going home.

“And we are testing the entire cohort of workers, because it is a very large group of workers and we really don’t want to take any chances with our essential food suppliers at this point in time.”

#### NEW CASES IN TWO CHILDCARE CENTRES, MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY

Two new cases have been confirmed in child care centres.

One child from Smartie Pants Early Learning Centre in Diamond Creek and one from Goodstart Early Learning in Box Hill returned positive tests overnight.

Both children attended the centres while infectious, and both centres are undergoing deep cleaning and contact tracing.

A new case has been confirmed in a healthcare worker at Orygen Youth Health facility in Footscray, and is believed to have worked while infectious.

Dr Van Dieman said the person may have been pre-symptomatic.

“That facility is now in lockdown and we are working very closely with Melbourne Health who run the facility,” she said.

“A number of staff have been put into quarantine who have been close contacts and obviously a number of patients are possibly close contacts so they are in quarantine in their rooms and full PPE is being undertaken, and all of the deep cleaning requirements have been done there and testing will be undertaken as required.”

A new case has also been confirmed in a Box Hill childcare centre.

A number of children and staff members are in quarantine, the deputy chief health officer said.

#### CANCER DRUG COULD HELP CORONAVIRUS PATIENTS

Melbourne researchers are behind a new international trial using an anti-cancer drug in the hope it could save the lives of seriously ill COVID-19 patients.

Researchers from the Hudson Institute of Medical Research in Clayton have been probing whether the prostate cancer drug Veyonda could help reduce inflammation and protect against organ failure in [coronavirus cases](#).

Their findings were picked up by Australian company Noxopharm, which last week announced it would begin trialling the drug in Europe.

Inflammation is one of the key causes of COVID-19 patients becoming so sick. When infected, the lungs are attacked and become inflamed.

The body reacts to this infection by sending proteins called cytokines to fight it off — but it can also cause the body to go into overdrive, resulting in extreme inflammation, which can lead to sepsis and fatally harm vital organs.

Research group head Michael Gantier said by stopping this reaction, the severity of the infection and any potential long-term impacts, could be reduced.

“Basically, if you are given this drug at the right time you can block the toxic inflammation and you will limit the tissue damage,” Dr Gantier said.

“The argument we are running is it is possible it (the drug) will limit amplification of that toxic damage you get when you have the infection.

“Ultimately, that’s better for the patient to recover — and it has better long-term impacts.”

The drug works by blocking what is known as the STING pathway, which has been linked to tissue damage and inflammation.

It’s hoped the drug can prevent that damage in COVID patients and restore balance so the body can recover.

Noxopharm is teaming up with hospitals in Europe to begin trialling Veyonda on COVID patients.

The company has looked to the overseas market due to the high volume of cases, as opposed to testing it in Australia.

Dr Gantier said while there was not direct evidence in COVID-19 patients as yet, the signs were promising.