COVIDSafe fact sheet

This fact sheet provides an overview of the public health initiative COVIDSafe – a mobile contact tracing app launched by the Australian Government in response to COVID-19.

What is COVIDSafe?

COVIDSafe is a mobile app designed to keep Australians safe and healthy by tracking cases of COVID-19 within our communities and, ultimately, helping to reduce virus spread.

How does COVIDSafe work?

- COVIDSafe can be voluntarily downloaded from the App Store on iPhones, and through Google Play on Androids.
- To be effective, the COVIDSafe app should be open and running on your phone when coming into contact with others – this could be when food shopping, or perhaps when exercising outside. The app will continue to work whether your phone is locked or unlocked.
- When you come into contact with others who are using the app, a 'digital handshake' is created. This means that the date, time, distance and duration of the contact made is noted. This information is securely encrypted and stored within the COVIDSafe app on your phone.
- This collected information is not accessible by anyone (including yourself) until a person is diagnosed with COVID-19, and they consent to uploading the contact information collected to a highly secure information storage system.
- The uploaded information enables relevant state or territory health officials to quickly notify those who may have contracted the virus through close contact with the person positively diagnosed, so that they can self-quarantine and get tested as soon as possible.

COVIDSafe and your privacy

- After downloading COVIDSafe, you will be asked to provide your name, age, postcode and phone number. This information along with your privacy is strictly protected.
- COVIDSafe does not track where you are, or what you are doing. The app uses Bluetooth to register when you are in contact with another person using the app. This technology can automate and improve what health officials already do manually.
- COVIDSafe cannot be used to enforce quarantine or isolation restrictions, or any other laws. It is a criminal offence to use any app data outside of the scope of the app's intention.
- Once the pandemic is over, or if you decide to delete the app, COVIDSafe – along with all of the information collected by and stored within the app – will be deleted permanently.

Why should I use COVIDSafe?

- While COVIDSafe use is entirely voluntary, the more people that download the app, the more effective it will be.
- Effective contact tracing is one of the most important steps in allowing the government to eventually lift the restrictions currently being enforced in our communities.
- With faster and more accurate contact tracing, more testing can be done and more lives can be saved.
- Without COVIDSafe, health officials are forced to rely on people being able to remember who they have been around, and being able to provide contact details for those people.

More information on COVIDSafe

Further detailed information on COVIDSafe can be found on the Australian Government Department of Health website, as well as on the department's COVIDSafe app FAQs page.