

## Breathe easy this pollen season

Do you wheeze or sneeze during pollen season? Grass pollen season has arrived, and runs from October to December.

During this time there is an increase in asthma and hay fever, and also a chance of thunderstorm asthma.

Thunderstorm asthma can happen when a particular type of thunderstorm releases high amounts of grass pollen into the air.

For people who have asthma or hay fever, especially those not taking a preventer, thunderstorm asthma can be sudden, serious and life threatening. There are severe symptoms including wheezing, feeling tight in the chest and coughing.



## Prepare and protect yourself from thunderstorm asthma

- If you have been diagnosed with asthma, visit your doctor to talk about how to prevent it from getting worse and what to do if it does.
- Learn the four steps of [asthma first aid](#) so you know what to do if you or someone is having an asthma attack.
- Monitor the [VicEmergency thunderstorm asthma forecast map](#) and stay indoors before and during thunderstorms.

**Protect yourself this pollen season – managing asthma and allergies matters.**

For more information visit:

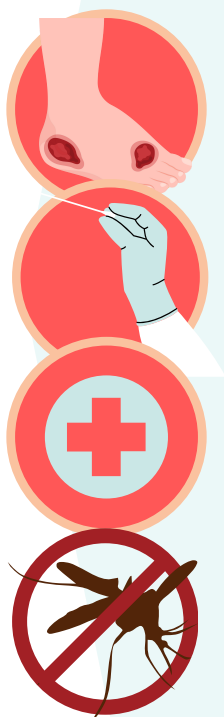
[wphu.org.au/protect-yourself-this-pollen-season-through-prevention](http://wphu.org.au/protect-yourself-this-pollen-season-through-prevention)

For thunderstorm asthma information in your language visit:

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/thunderstorm-asthma#in-your-language](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/thunderstorm-asthma#in-your-language)



## If you live in Brunswick West, Coburg, Essendon, Moonee Ponds, Pascoe Vale South and Strathmore - be aware of Buruli ulcer.



Buruli ulcer is a skin infection caused by bacteria called *Mycobacterium ulcerans*. Research shows that the infection spreads from possums to people through mosquitoes.

Cases of Buruli ulcer are increasing in **Brunswick West, Coburg, Essendon, Moonee Ponds, Pascoe Vale South, and Strathmore.**

If you notice a **new or slow healing sore, ulcer or skin infection**, see your GP and ask for a **Buruli ulcer test**.

Once diagnosed, Buruli ulcer can be treated with specific **antibiotics**. It is important to get a **diagnosis from a doctor as early as possible**.

**Reducing your risk of mosquito bites can greatly reduce your risk of Buruli ulcer.** Take steps to avoid getting bitten, especially during mosquito season (November to April) and particularly around your own property.

Learn more at: [www.wphu.org.au/health-topics/buruli-ulcer](http://www.wphu.org.au/health-topics/buruli-ulcer)

## Free help faster - Urgent Care Services

Walk-in to a free Urgent Care Clinic when you need immediate healthcare but it's not life-threatening. This includes treatment for mild infections, burns, suspected fractures, and sprains. They also provide pathology and imaging services that may be onsite or nearby.

With 29 locations across Victoria, the Clinics provide expert urgent care seven days a week, open early to late.

You do not need a Medicare card, an appointment or a referral from your GP. Urgent Care Clinics are run through Priority Primary Care Centre's and Medicare Urgent Care Clinics.

Find your nearest Urgent Care Clinic at:  
<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/urgent-care-clinics>



**Urgent Care Clinics**  
Walk in service



**Virtual Emergency Care**  
24/7 video call



**Nurse-on-Call**  
24/7 call 1300 60 60 24

Urgent Care Services  
Victoria





## 'The Hanky' Multicultural Campaign: 8 October – 16 November

**Every cigarette is doing you damage!** Smoking causes respiratory illnesses like emphysema, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer. Even one a day can have serious consequences.

'The Hanky' is a campaign designed for **Arabic-speaking, Mandarin-speaking and Vietnamese-speaking** communities. It raises awareness of the harms of smoking. 'The Hanky' focuses on lung damage and demonstrates the links between short-term signs and long-term impacts caused by smoking.

**Quitline** is a trusted source of information, and its counsellors can assist you in quitting smoking or vaping. They can also communicate in your preferred language through an interpreter. Call and leave a message, and a Quitline counsellor will ring you back together with an interpreter:

- for Arabic call 03 8583 2905
- for Mandarin call 03 8583 2903
- for Vietnamese call 03 8583 2906.

You can also start a chat with Quitline in your language using webchat at [quit.org.au](https://quit.org.au), or via [WhatsApp +61 385 832 920](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/0029va333333333333333333), [Facebook Messenger @quitvic](https://www.facebook.com/quitvic) or [SMS 0482 090 634](https://www.sms.gov.au).

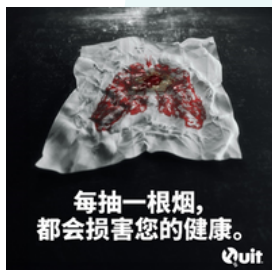
The campaign toolkit with in-language Arabic, simplified Chinese and Vietnamese resources includes:

- campaign videos
- social media tiles and sample posts
- campaign posters
- sample website/newsletter copy.

The campaign is available for use at:

<https://www.quit.org.au/the-hanky-campaign-toolkit>

*We'd love to hear if you share this campaign with your networks.  
Let us know by emailing [wphu@wh.org.au](mailto:wphu@wh.org.au)*



## Outfox mpox

Cases of mpox continue to increase. As of 17 October, 330 mpox cases have been notified in Victoria since April 2024. Mpox is a viral infection that spreads through sex and close physical contact.

Symptoms of mpox can include a rash, fever, chills, headache and muscle aches.

### Protect yourself against mpox by:

**Getting tested** - if you notice symptoms of mpox, especially a rash, seek medical care and get tested at your GP or the Melbourne Sexual Health Centre.

**Getting vaccinated** - the mpox vaccine provides protection against mpox and is available free-of-charge for specific priority groups in Victoria.

**Limiting the number of sexual partners** - this can lower your risk of exposure to mpox.

Read more about mpox at:

[www.wphu.org.au/health-topics/mpox](https://www.wphu.org.au/health-topics/mpox)

## Whooping cough on the rise in Victoria

Cases of whooping cough (pertussis) continue to increase in Victoria, particularly among school-aged children.

Whooping cough is a very contagious respiratory infection spread by coughing and sneezing.

People of all ages can get whooping cough: however, it can be especially **serious for babies under six months** who have not yet had three doses of the whooping cough vaccine.

If you develop symptoms of whooping cough, you should seek prompt medical care from your doctor. Symptoms of whooping cough include:

- a blocked or runny nose
- tiredness
- mild fever
- severe bouts of coughing, which are often followed by a 'whooping' sound on inhalation.

**Vaccination is the best way to prevent whooping cough** in our community as it lowers the risk of infection and severe illness.

Learn more about whooping cough at:

<https://www.wphu.org.au/health-topics/whooping-cough-pertussis/>





## Free INFANT facilitator training: 16 October – 6 December

Elevate your professional knowledge of active play and healthy eating for babies aged 0-2. Registrations are now open – don't miss out!

Join the course to learn about the **INFANT** program, including its content, facilitation, and implementation within your community. This course equips participants with the latest evidence on healthy eating and active play in the early years of life.

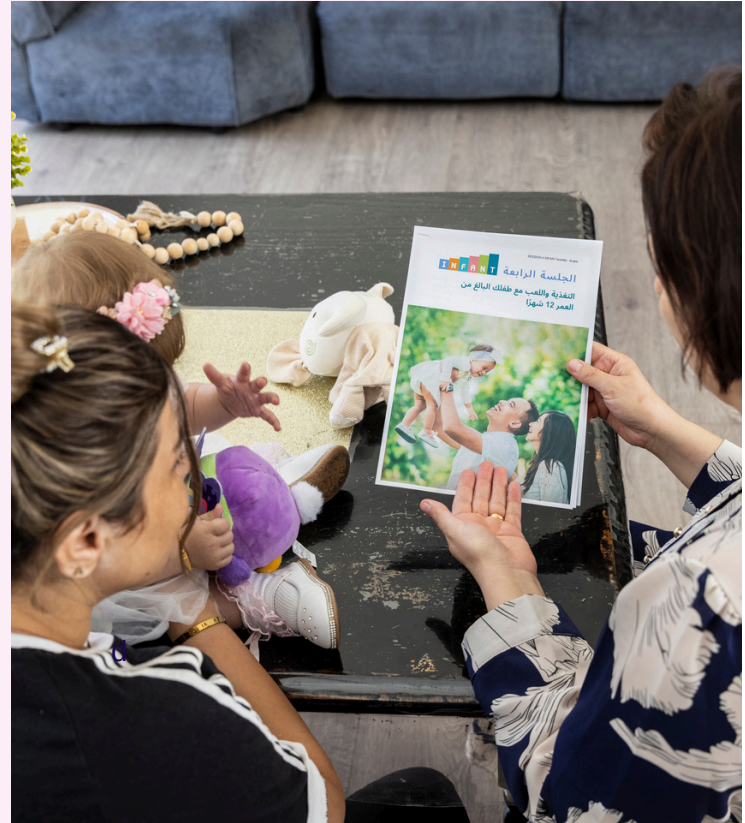
- Free online training is currently offered in Victoria until the end of 2024.
- Training is self-guided online, interactive and takes approximately 6-8 hours.
- Certificate upon completion for logging CPD points.

### Registration:

<https://www.infantprogram.org/facilitator-training/>

### Upcoming Training Dates:

14th October – 6th December, 2024



**Important:** The Department of Health has funded this current round of INFANT training, making it free for participants. INFANT training is ideal for anyone working with parents and young children including (but not exclusive to) MCH staff, Early Years Educators, Dietitians, Health Promotion Officers, Bilingual Health Educators, Bicultural Workers, Aboriginal Health Workers.

For any enquiries, please contact WPHU's Population Health Promotion Officer – Ayesha Maharaj [ayesha.maharaj@wh.org.au](mailto:ayesha.maharaj@wh.org.au)

The Western Public Health Unit, in collaboration with INFANT, have translated the highly visual **INFANT booklets** and videos into 6 priority languages: Arabic, Hindi, Punjabi, Simplified-Chinese, Urdu and Vietnamese.

### Access the translated resources at:

<https://www.infantprogram.org/getting-started/#translated-resources-section>



Send an email to: [WPHU@wh.org.au](mailto:WPHU@wh.org.au) with the subject 'Subscribe to Community Engagement Noticeboard' if you would like to receive this Noticeboard.