

Combating Covid-19

A year of Covid-19
in Singapore

One year after Singapore confirmed its first case of the disease,
Clara Chong looks at the milestones in the nation's response to the pandemic

SCAN TO WATCH



<https://str.sg/year23>



Gan Kim Yong and Lawrence Wong on the Covid-19 pandemic: <https://str.sg/mtf22>



Jan 23, 2020

- Singapore announces its first confirmed case of Covid-19 – a 66-year-old Chinese man from Wuhan, China.



Feb 7

- The Ministry of Health (MOH) raises the Dorscon level from yellow to orange, signalling that there is widespread transmission of Covid-19 from unknown sources. This is one level below the highest level of red, which signifies an out-of-control pandemic.
- Dorscon, or Disease Outbreak Response System Condition, is part of Singapore's pandemic preparedness plan and describes the current disease situation and what has to be done.

- Shortly after the Dorscon level is raised, there is a wave of panic buying. Items like instant noodles and toilet paper fly off the shelves and long queues form at supermarkets. The frenzy continues the next day even as politicians and supermarkets call for calm, stressing that Singapore has enough stocks of essential supplies and food.
- A year later, the nation's Dorscon level remains at orange.



Feb 18

- Budget Day. Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat unveils the Unity Budget, the first of four Budgets that will be rolled out in less than four months.

- Through the Budgets (Unity, Resilience, Solidarity and Fortitude) the Government dedicates close to \$100 billion – or nearly 20 per cent of gross domestic product – to supporting Singaporeans and businesses in the battle against Covid-19.

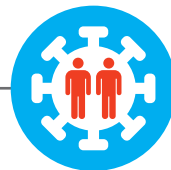
- Help is in the form of cash for some Singaporeans, while businesses are assisted through Jobs Support Scheme payouts and rental relief. There is also assistance rendered for the lower-income and self-employed groups.



March 20

- The TraceTogether contact tracing app is launched. The app can identify, via wireless Bluetooth technology, people who have been within 2m of Covid-19 patients for at least 30 minutes. Tokens are later issued amid questions about the implications for privacy. Both the token and the app do not collect location data.
- It has since been revealed, however, that TraceTogether

- data can be used for police investigations, which has raised questions over trust in government, especially in relation to data privacy.
- The Government has announced that a law will be passed to ensure that this data, if needed for criminal investigations, can be used only to look into serious offences including murder, terrorism and rape.



March 21

- Singapore reports its first two Covid-19 deaths: A 75-year-old Singaporean woman and a 64-year-old Indonesian man.
- Though the country has kept its death rate impressively low, seniors remain a vulnerable group because they have a higher chance of developing severe complications from the coronavirus. This risk stems from several factors, including a weaker immune system and higher prevalence of multiple medical conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and hypertension.



March 23

- Singapore sees a new peak in daily imported cases – around 50 a day.
- All short-term visitors are not allowed to enter or transit Singapore from 11.59pm on this day.
- A slew of measures are implemented in the weeks and months ahead. These have been tightened in the new year in response to new virus variants and the worsening global situation.

TIMELINE CONTINUED ON A32&33

JANUARY 2020

FEBRUARY

MARCH