

NSW Health factsheet for close contacts

Supplementary information to the NSW Health Self-Isolation Guideline



A close contact is someone who has been near enough to a person with COVID-19 while they were infectious that there is a reasonable chance they will have become infected with COVID-19. Close contact can occur in a number of places including in the home, or at other venues.

If you have been identified as a closed contact of a person with COVID-19 you need to isolate yourself in your home or another suitable place of residence. You also need to get tested for COVID-19, regardless of symptoms.

Home isolation for close contacts is enforceable under the Public Health (COVID Self-Isolation) Order (No 5) 2020.

An authorised contact tracer is a NSW Health worker who investigates COVID-19 to identify and follow up people who have had contact with someone with COVID-19.

How long do I need to be in home isolation?

All close contacts will need to self-isolate, even if you are currently feeling well.

You will need to isolate until 14 days after you last saw that person or attended a place where that person visited.

The relevant period for isolation will be notified to you in writing by an authorised contact tracer (this may be in the form of a text message). You may also receive a video call from a NSW Health officer.

You **must**:

- self-isolate at your residence or another suitable place for the period of time determined by the authorised contact tracer (this will be no more than 14 days)
- notify the authorised contact tracer of the place you will be self-isolating and provide a contact phone number.

Do I need to be tested for COVID-19?

If you are a close contact of someone infected with COVID-19, you should get tested as soon as possible, regardless of symptoms.

If you test negative, you still need to remain in isolation until the isolation period finishes.

Do I need to be tested before leaving isolation?

If you live in the same household, or are identified as a close social contact of the infected person, you should be tested again between days 10 and 12 (since your last contact with an infected person) of your isolation period. You should continue to self-isolate until you have completed your isolation period and have received a negative test result.

For more information, refer to [Release from isolation](#).

Monitor for symptoms and seek help if they develop

If you develop symptoms at any point during or after your isolation period get tested right away.

Even if you have received a negative test result, it is still possible to become sick later. This is why it is so important to detect any sign of infection as early as possible.

You should monitor yourself for any new [symptoms](#). Watch particularly for:

- fever (37.5°C or higher) or history of fever (night sweats, chills)
- cough
- shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- runny nose
- sore throat
- loss of smell
- loss of taste.

Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, headache, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting and loss of appetite.

Unexplained chest pain and conjunctivitis have also been reported as symptoms of COVID-19.

If you develop symptoms, you should seek help and get tested as soon as possible. Immediately tell staff (at testing clinic or general practitioner) that you are a close contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19.

You have two main options:

- Visit your nearest [COVID-19 clinic or drive through clinic](#) or drive through clinic.
- Call your local doctor to make an appointment.

If you are unable to do either of the above please contact your local [Public Health Unit](#).

Use a surgical mask when in the presence of other people, or when attending medical care.

If you become severely unwell and it is a medical emergency you should phone 000. Tell the ambulance staff that you have been a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

If you test negative, you still need to remain in isolation until the original 14-day isolation period finishes.

Other people sharing a house with you

In most cases other people who are sharing a house with you do not need to home isolate provided you can separate yourself from other members of your household. People who work in high risk settings (e.g. residential settings such as aged care facilities, military residential groups, boarding schools, boarding houses, homeless shelters, correctional facilities, remote industrial sites with accommodation, migrant workers accommodation, remote communities, abattoirs) must isolate from the contact and not attend high risk settings until effective isolation is achieved and the close contact has a negative test.

However, if you become infected with COVID-19, people sharing the house with you are likely to become close contacts and they would then be required to self-isolate. They should follow the testing advice above for close contacts sharing a household with someone infected with COVID-19.

What to do if my child is the only one in the family who is a close contact?

If your child is identified as a close contact it is recommended that a carer isolates with the child while other members of the household should remain separate, or seek alternative accommodation where practicable. If it is not possible to effectively isolate the child from other members of the household then the whole household will need to isolate.

Tips for you and your family to help cope with home isolation

Being in home isolation can be frightening, particularly for young children. We've put together some tips for coping:

- Talk to the other members of the family about COVID-19 to reduce anxiety. You can find accurate, up to date information Visit [NSW Health - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#) .
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Keep up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- Arrange with your employer to work from home, if possible.
- If your child is a close contact, ask your child's school to supply lesson information and homework by email.
- Think about how you have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure yourself that you will cope with this situation too. Remember that isolation won't last for long.
- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media.
- Exercise regularly at home. Options could include exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.
- Ask your family, friends or other members of the household to pick up your groceries and medicines for you. If this is not possible, you may be able to order groceries and medicines (including prescription medicines) online or by telephone.

More information and support

For more information and support while in home isolation:

- [Lifeline Australia](#) : 13 11 14
A crisis support service that provides short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.
- [Kids Helpline](#) : 1800 551800
A free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years.
- NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
Mental health crisis telephone service in NSW.
- Visit [NSW Health - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)