

NSW Health factsheet for persons with COVID-19

Supplementary information to the NSW Health Self-Isolation Guideline

While some people who are diagnosed with novel coronavirus infection (COVID-19) will need to be admitted to hospital, most people will have mild illness and can stay at home in isolation.

For most people, release from isolation will be based on clinical features, such as duration of illness and time elapsed since resolution of all symptoms. The health service looking after you, or your local public health unit, must make an assessment and advise you on when you can stop self-isolation.

You must follow the self-isolation rules. It is an offence not to comply and is punishable by fines, imprisonment or both.

How long do I need to be in self-isolation?

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 you will need to remain in isolation until you are cleared by a designated health practitioner.

If you are not in hospital, you must:

- self-isolate at your residence or another suitable place for the period of time determined by a designated health practitioner. You must remain in isolation until medically assessed as non-infectious and cleared by a medical practitioner
- notify the designated health practitioner of the place you will be self-isolating and provide the address and a contact phone number.

What do I need to do?

Monitor symptoms

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)

If your symptoms become serious (e.g. shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing), you should call 000. Tell the ambulance staff you have been diagnosed with COVID-19. If your symptoms become worse, but are not serious, contact your doctor or the public health unit.

Release from isolation

If you were not admitted to hospital or you were admitted to hospital for reasons not directly related to acute COVID-19 you can leave isolation once medically assessed as non-infectious and cleared by a medical practitioner who confirms:

- at least 10 days have passed since your onset of symptoms and
- there have been no fever and respiratory symptoms of the acute illness for the previous 72 hours.

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If your illness was severe enough to need admission to hospital, you can be released from isolation once you have been medically assessed as non-infectious and cleared by a medical practitioner who confirms:

- at least 14 days have passed since onset of symptoms and
- there have been no fever and respiratory symptoms of the acute illness for the previous 72 hours.

Other criteria may apply if your illness is prolonged and your fever or respiratory symptoms have not resolved after 14 days.

Once you are no longer in isolation you should continue to practice hand hygiene, cough etiquette and physical distancing.

People with COVID-19 who are significantly immunocompromised

In addition to meeting the above criteria, if you are a person who is significantly immunocompromised, you will be required to also have at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected. These will be taken at least 7 days after the beginning of symptoms, at least 24 hours apart and must be PCR negative you must also be medically assessed as non-infectious and cleared by a medical practitioner before you can be released from isolation.

Information for caregivers and household members

There should only be people in the home who are essential for providing care for the person who is under isolation and who normally reside there and cannot find alternative accommodation.

Caregivers and household members should follow the advice below to reduce their risk of infection.

Monitor for symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- a fever (37.5°C or higher)
- a cough
- runny nose
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- loss of taste or loss of smell

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 as soon as possible. Immediately tell staff (at testing clinic or general practitioner) that you are either caring for or living with a person with confirmed COVID-19.

You have two main options:

- Visit your nearest [COVID-19 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.

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Always wash your hands before putting on and after taking off gloves and masks.

Wear a surgical mask

Wear a surgical mask and disposable gloves when you are in the same room as the person with COVID-19, or when you touch or have contact with the person's blood, body fluids and/or secretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhoea.

- Make sure your mask covers your nose and mouth at all times.
- Throw out disposable surgical masks and disposable gloves after use.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing the surgical mask and gloves.

Clean household surfaces

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, at least once a day wearing disposable gloves. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them.

- Read labels of cleaning products and follow recommendations on product labels. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves or aprons and making sure the areas is well ventilated when using the product.
- Use a household disinfectant or a diluted bleach solution on hard surfaces. To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 4 cups of water.
- Wear a surgical mask and disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves and masks.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them.
- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, wash and dry with the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
- Dishes should be washed in a dishwasher where possible.

Disposing of contaminated items

Place all used disposable gloves, surgical masks, and other contaminated items in a lined waste bin before disposing of them with other household waste. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.

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 on [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.

- Ask your child's school to supply assignments, work sheets and homework by post or 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 forever.
- 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 or friends to pick up your groceries and medicines for you (unless they are close contacts and also in isolation). If this is not possible, you can order groceries and medicines (including prescription medicines) online or by telephone.
- Treat isolation as an opportunity to do some of those things you never usually have time for, such as board games, craft, drawing and reading.

Still have questions or need support while in 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.
- Call the National Coronavirus Health Information line: 1800 020 080

For more information

Visit [NSW Health - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#) or refer to [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) CDNA National Guidelines for Public Health Units \(for further information on release from isolation\)](#).