

# Self-isolation information for recently returned travellers and unaccompanied minors who have been granted an exemption from hotel quarantine

**This information applies to unaccompanied minors. If an unaccompanied minor does not reside in NSW and will continue onto another jurisdiction, the jurisdiction will be notified, and it will be up to the receiving jurisdiction to determine the actions regarding the unaccompanied minor upon arrival.**

## How long do I need to be in home isolation?

You will need to self-isolate for the entire quarantine period. This is because you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

The quarantine period for travellers returning from overseas including unaccompanied minors starts on the day the traveller arrives in NSW (day 0) and ends when:

- at least 14 full (24 hour) days have passed and, as a result of testing, the Chief Health Officer (or delegate) is satisfied that you would not pose a risk of infecting other people with COVID-19, or
- 24 full days have passed.

It is important that you have a COVID-19 test on day 12 of your quarantine period so that you can be released from quarantine after 14 days of isolation if your test result is negative.

NSW Health also recommends that you are tested at the start of your quarantine period. This is because if you do have the COVID-19 virus when you arrive in NSW, it will be detected earlier if you are tested, and this may decrease the total time that you have to stay in isolation. You will be offered a COVID-19 test at the airport when you arrive.

If no symptoms develop within the quarantine period, it is very unlikely that you have been infected but everyone returning from overseas including unaccompanied minors should still be alert for symptoms.

Home isolation applies to all overseas travellers including unaccompanied minors who have been granted an exemption from hotel quarantine, even if you are currently feeling well.

If you are tested at the beginning of your quarantine period and test negative for COVID-19 you still need to remain in home isolation until the end of your quarantine period. This is because people can get a negative test result during the quarantine period even if they are infected with the COVID-19 virus.

## Getting to your home or a hotel for self-isolation

You should travel directly to the place where you will undertake your self-isolation. You can travel by:

- private car
- taxi or ride-share (you must travel in the backseat with a mask on).

If travelling to another state, you may need to apply for an exemption from that State or Territory. This information will be sourced from other states and territories by NSW Health and will be provided to you to facilitate your travel plan. If you are travelling interstate, you must wear a mask during your onward travel.

## Monitor symptoms and seek help if you develop symptoms

If you do not have COVID-19 [symptoms](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx#1-4) (https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/frequently-asked-questions.aspx#1-4), or are tested and receive a negative result, this does not mean you will not become

sick later. This is because people who are incubating the infection typically only test positive a day or two before symptoms appear.

This is why it is so important for you to monitor for any symptoms of infection and if they appear be tested as soon as possible. During the quarantine period monitor for any new symptoms. Watch particularly for:

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

Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include headache, fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, 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.

Please see below for testing options:

- Visit your nearest [COVID-19 clinic or drive through clinic](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/clinics.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/clinics.aspx>).
- 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](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/pages/phus.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/infectious/pages/phus.aspx>).

**Note:** If you are in self-isolation and go to the doctor, you will need to wear a surgical mask. You should travel directly to the doctor or COVID-19 clinic by private car. NSW Health advises not to use public transport.

**If you are in self-isolation and become severely unwell, and it is a medical emergency, you should phone 000.** You should tell the ambulance staff that you have been in home isolation for COVID-19 as a returned traveller.

## Can I go to work or school? Can I have visitors?

No. Home isolation means you must stay at home and restrict normal activities. You cannot go to work, school, childcare, university, recreation facilities, public areas, or go shopping.

You should not allow people who do not have an essential need, to be in the home to visit while you are in self-isolation.

You cannot leave the house, apart from medical care, unless you have been given a specific exemption to do so and follow any directions given to reduce the risk of close contact with other people.

**Note:** You can leave home to seek medical care or because of an emergency (including to avoid injury or escape a risk of harm from domestic violence), but you must wear a surgical mask.

## Can I go into the garden or go for a walk?

You can go into your private garden or courtyard or onto your private balcony, if you have one.

## You should separate from other people in their home, where practicable

You should, as much as possible:

- remain separated from others (this includes children although this is not always practical)
- wear a surgical mask when in the same room as another person (even if they are also in isolation) and when visiting a healthcare provider.
- use a separate bathroom, if available.

- avoid shared or communal areas and wear a surgical mask when moving through these areas.
- not share a room with siblings or other family members; especially people who are at risk of severe disease, such as elderly people, immunocompromised people, and those who have heart, lung or kidney conditions, or diabetes.

## Wash hands

You should wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use a hand sanitiser. Make sure hands are washed:

- before entering an area used by other people
- before touching things used by other people
- after using the bathroom
- after coughing or sneezing
- before putting on and after removing facemasks.

## Wear the mask properly

You should wear a surgical mask when in the same room with other people (even if they are also in isolation) and when visiting a healthcare provider. Make sure it always covers the nose and mouth and avoid touching the mask while wearing it.

## 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 \(Coronavirus\)](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx>).
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Keep up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- 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 the unaccompanied minor they 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 streaming exercise workouts, 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.

## Do I need to be tested before leaving home self-isolation?

If you are an international traveller, it is important that you have a COVID-19 test on arrival (day 0) and again on day 12 of the quarantine period, even if you are well. Evidence of a test result will be needed to assess whether you can leave quarantine. If you, or your child, do not have a COVID-19 test, this means that you will need to stay in home isolation until **24 days** after you arrived in NSW. Test results are typically ready within 24-48 hours which means they should be received prior to the expected date of release from isolation.

If you develop any of the symptoms listed in the 'monitor symptoms' section of this document during the quarantine period, then you need to get assessed and tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible. This will be in addition to having a COVID-19 test on arrival (day 0) and on day 12 if you are an international traveller.

If you test negative, you will still need to remain in isolation until the quarantine period finishes. For more information, refer to [Release from isolation](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/release-from-isolation.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/release-from-isolation.aspx>).

## More information and support

For more information and support while in home isolation:

- [Lifeline Australia](https://www.lifeline.org.au): <https://www.lifeline.org.au> or 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](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au): <https://www.kidshelpline.com.au> or 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 \(Coronavirus\)](https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx) (<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/default.aspx>)