

Release and recovery from COVID-19



- A person who has had COVID-19 is released from isolation (also known as 'medically cleared') when they are no longer infectious. This means they cannot pass COVID-19 on to other people.
- Most people with COVID-19 get better within a few weeks but some people may have symptoms that last much longer.
- Keep a copy of your medical clearance notice.
- Vaccination is strongly recommended for people 12 years of age and over. There is no need to delay vaccination once you have fully recovered from COVID-19. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

How will I know when I can leave self-isolation?

You will have received a text message (SMS) or email which confirms the end of your isolation period. This is called your medical clearance notice. This means that you are no longer infectious and cannot pass COVID-19 on to other people.

Please keep the SMS or email of your medical clearance notice with you when you leave home in case you need it to show your employer or NSW Police.

Please also continue to follow the [rules and restrictions](#) that are in place where you live once you finish isolating.

Am I likely to have any long term effects from COVID-19?

We advise that you make some time to follow-up with your regular doctor after you have received your medical clearance notice.

Most people who have COVID-19 recover completely within a few weeks. This is not the same for everyone. Symptoms that are more likely to last beyond a few weeks include:

- feeling tired (fatigue)
- chest discomfort
- cough.

Other physical symptoms can also continue beyond a few weeks. These include problems with sense of smell or taste, headache, runny nose, joint or muscle pain, trouble sleeping or eating, sweating, and diarrhoea.

Some people have ongoing psychological symptoms too. These might include:

- trouble thinking clearly, focusing, or remembering
- depression, anxiety, or a related condition called post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD")

It is hard for doctors to predict when symptoms will improve, since this is different for different people. Your recovery will depend on your age, your overall health, and how severe your COVID-19 symptoms are. Some symptoms, like fatigue, might continue even while others improve or go away. You should discuss ongoing or worsening symptoms with your doctor.

Do I still need to get tested for COVID-19 after I have been released from self-isolation?

If it has been more than three months since you recovered from COVID-19 you should get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms because your immunity may have decreased. Unfortunately, people can become unwell with COVID-19 more than once. Call your GP about your symptoms – they may order other tests to check for other illnesses.

Routine COVID-19 testing when you do not have symptoms (such as workplace surveillance testing) is not recommended for six months after you have recovered. This is because tests for COVID-19 may continue to give a positive result for a while after infection, even though you are no longer infectious.

If your medical clearance notice indicates that you have a temporary exemption from mandatory surveillance testing, **this exemption is valid in NSW only**. Testing requirements in other states and territories still apply. Please check the rules prior to travelling interstate.

How soon should I get vaccinated?

If you have not already been vaccinated, you can now receive your COVID-19 vaccination. **There is no need to delay vaccination if you have fully recovered.**

If you have already had your first COVID-19 vaccine before you were infected, please wait until you have recovered from your illness before you have your second dose.

Please talk to your doctor if you are unsure about when it is best for you to get vaccinated.

Public health orders require some people to be vaccinated. You can get a temporary medical exemption to COVID-19 vaccination from your GP if needed.

If your medical clearance notice indicates that you have a temporary exemption from vaccination, **this exemption is valid in NSW only**. If you need to be vaccinated for employment, schooling, or other activities in another jurisdiction, please check the rules that apply in that state or territory.

What if I am exposed to someone with COVID-19 again?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of getting it again in the 6 months after infection as most people develop some immunity (ability to fight the disease).

If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 in the 6 months following your infection, you will generally not be considered a close contact and will not need to self-isolate or get a test unless you have symptoms.

Mental health support

We understand that this may have been a challenging time for you and want to ensure that you have access to support throughout your recovery.

NSW Health has partnered with Sonder to provide a personal wellbeing service, available to help support you. The app provides access to 24/7 multilingual chat and phone access to a range of mental health, medical and wellbeing support services. You can [download the Sonder app](#) for free. You may also receive a text message from Sonder notifying you that you have free access to the app through NSW Health. Downloading the app is optional and Sonder do not retain or use your data for any other purpose than notifying you of this service.

Other support services you can access include:

- NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511
- Beyond Blue helpline – 1800 512 348
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Services NSW [mental wellbeing resources](#)
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800.

When can I return to normal activities?

Once you have received your medical clearance notice, you can return to your usual activities. Please continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask in line with current recommendations and requirements, and regularly perform hand hygiene. Wash your hands often with soap and water (or alcohol hand sanitiser) for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. These things are important for your safety, and to ensure the safety of your family, friends and community.

Further information

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your local doctor.

You can also call NSW Health on **1800 943 553**

We encourage you to visit the [NSW Health website](#) for the latest and most up to date information regarding COVID-19.