



Home isolation guidance when unwell (suspected or confirmed cases)



Who should be isolated at home?

Home isolation for people who are suspected or confirmed to have novel coronavirus COVID-19 is appropriate in the following circumstances, if:

- they are well enough to receive care at home;
- they have appropriate caregivers at home;
- there is a separate bedroom where they can recover without sharing an immediate space with others;
- they have access to food and other necessities;
- they (and anyone who lives in the same home) have access to the recommended personal protective equipment (at a minimum, gloves and mask); and
- they do not live with household members who may be at increased risk of complications from novel coronavirus infection (e.g. people over the age of 65, young children, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions).

Wherever possible, if you need to travel to your location for isolation (for example, traveling from the airport), you are advised to use a personal mode of transport, such as a car, to minimise exposure to others. If you need to use public transport (e.g. taxis, ride-hail services, trains, buses and trams), follow the precautions outlined in the public transport guide at www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-drivers-and-passengers-using-public-transport

Being isolated at home means that people need to stay at home. A person in isolation cannot leave to attend public places, including work, school, childcare or university. Only people who usually live in the household should be in the home. Do not see visitors.

Do I need to wear a mask inside my home?

You should wear a mask while you are inside your home when other people are present. If you cannot wear a surgical mask, the people who live with you should not stay in the same room as you and should wear a mask if they enter your room.

What about other people in my home?

Only household members who are essential for caring for you should stay in the home. Other people living in the home should consider staying elsewhere if possible. Elderly people and those with compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions should stay away. If you are sharing the home with others, you should stay in a different room from them, or be separated as much as possible. You should use a separate bathroom, if available. Avoid shared or communal areas and wear a surgical mask when moving through these areas. Surfaces in shared areas such as door handles, taps and benches should be cleaned daily with household disinfectant or a diluted bleach solution (see the cleaning section below).

Do carers or household members need to be isolated as well?

If you are a confirmed case, the people you live with and other close contacts will need to be isolated at home. They will be contacted by your local public health unit and told how long they need to be isolated.

If you are suspected of being infected and are waiting on test results, the people you live with may need to be isolated—even if they don't have any symptoms. This will be determined by your public health unit on a case-by-case basis. You will be contacted and told whether your household members and close contacts need to be isolated. If they do not require isolation and become unwell, they should contact your local public health unit who will assess and advise on what to do next. If they have difficulty breathing or are seriously unwell and it is an emergency, they should call triple zero (000) immediately and alert ambulance staff to their travel/contact history.

If you are a suspected or confirmed case you are welcome to call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line

National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080

How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 meters from people).

Going outside

If you live in a private house, then it is safe for you to go outside into your garden or courtyard. If you live in an apartment, it is also safe for you to go outside into the garden but you should wear a mask to minimise risk to others. You should move quickly through any common areas and wear a mask. It is safe to go onto your balcony if you have one.

Cleaning

If others in the home want to clean your room, ask them to put on a mask before entering the room. They should wear gloves while cleaning, and use alcohol hand rub before and after wearing gloves. Surfaces which are touched regularly, such as door handles, kitchen and bathroom areas and phones should be cleaned frequently using detergent and water or a detergent-based cleaner.

Keeping spirits up while in home isolation

Being in isolation can be stressful. Suggestions include:

- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media;
- Learn more about coronavirus and talk with others. Understanding coronavirus will reduce anxiety;
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language;

- Where possible, keep up normal daily routines, such as eating and exercise. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression;
- Reflect on your resilience and on how you have coped with difficult situations in the past. Remember that isolation won't be for long.

Reducing boredom during isolation

Being isolated at home can cause boredom and stress. Suggestions include:

- Arrange with your employer to work from home, if possible;
- Ask your child's school to supply assignments or homework by post or email;
- Treat quarantine as an opportunity to do activities that help you relax.

Where can I get more information?

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.