

NSW Health self-isolation guidelines for people confirmed to have COVID-19 infection

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

If you are someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 your release from isolation will depend upon whether your illness was managed at home, in a hospital or a combination of both.

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.

Monitor symptoms

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

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

No. Self-isolation means you must stay at your home or hotel and restrict your normal activities.

You cannot go to work, school, childcare, university, recreation facilities, or public areas, or go shopping.

You should not allow people who do not have an essential need to be in your home or accommodation while you are in isolation.

Note: You can leave your home or accommodation to seek medical care or because of an emergency.

Can I go into the garden?

You can go into your private garden if you have one.

Separate yourself from the other people in your home

If you are sharing your home or accommodation with others you should, as much as possible:

- remain separated from others
- wear a surgical mask when you are in the same room as another person
- 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 people who are at risk of severe disease, such as elderly people, immunocompromised people, and those who have heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.

For further information about isolation requirements for parents and children, please refer to parents and carers.

Wear a surgical mask

You should wear a surgical mask when you are in the same room with other people (even if they are also in isolation) and when you visit a healthcare provider. Make sure your surgical mask covers your nose and mouth at all times, and avoid touching your mask unnecessarily.

To access this document electronically please scan the QR code.



Cover coughs and sneezes

You should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow. Used tissues should be placed in a bin, and hands immediately washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Wash your hands

You should 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. Ensure you wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser:

- before entering an area where there are other people
- before touching things used by other people
- after using the bathroom
- after coughing or sneezing
- before putting on, and after removing, gloves and masks.

Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water or use a dishwasher/washing machine.

Release from isolation

If your illness was managed in isolation at home you can leave isolation once your doctor has confirmed:

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

If your illness was managed in hospital and you have been discharged to home isolation, you can be released from isolation once your doctor has confirmed:

- at least 10 days have passed since hospital discharge and
- there have been no symptoms of the acute illness for the previous 72 hours

If your illness was managed in hospital and you are being discharged **after** you have had two consecutive negative COVID-19 PCR swabs collected at least 24 hours apart, at least 7 days from symptom onset, you can be released from isolation.

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

Persons who need to present to an emergency department or general practice for medical consultations and treatment can do so, but should, where feasible, inform staff before arrival if they have recently been released from isolation.

People with COVID-19 who are significantly immunocompromised

In addition to meeting the above criteria, persons who are significantly immunocompromised can be released from isolation when they are PCR negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart at least 7 days after symptom onset.

Prevention steps for caregivers and household members of confirmed cases

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

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

Monitor symptoms

If you are a caregiver or household member and develop a fever (37.5°C or higher), a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or loss of smell, visit your nearest local [COVID-19 or drive through clinic](#) or

call your GP, unless it is a medical emergency (when you should call 000). Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include fatigue, runny nose, muscle pain, joint pain, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting and loss of appetite. Tell your GP or the COVID-19 clinic that you are caring for or living with a person with confirmed COVID-19. 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 confirmed infection, 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

- 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, friends or other members of the household to pick up your groceries and medicines for you. 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 \(for further information on release from isolation\)](#).