

Patient Guide to Self-isolation and Self-quarantine

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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To help stop the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) you may need to either:

- Self-quarantine
- Self-isolate

What is the difference between self-isolation and self-quarantine?

The rules are the same for people in self-quarantine and self-isolation. The major difference is the requirements on the people who live with you.

Self-quarantine

You must self-quarantine if:

- You have been advised that you must self-quarantine by a doctor or Infectious Disease Branch Officer
- You are a close contact of a confirmed case of coronavirus
- You are returning to Australia from another country
NOTE: police are periodically checking on people who have returned from overseas to ensure they comply with the 14 day quarantine.
- You are at risk of having the COVID-19 infection, but not actually known to be infected. You may or may not end up with it.
- You are asked to wait it out in isolation until 14 days have passed if you remain well. This reduces the chances of the infection spreading and applies if you have come back from the growing list of countries with a lot of infection or if you have had contact with someone who is positive.
- If you become unwell during the 14 days, testing is done and if **positive** you move into isolation phase (or into hospital if very unwell)
- If unwell but testing is negative, you still need to stay in quarantine until the 14 days are up because it could take that long for the infection to show
- If well at the end of the 14 days, you may resume normal contact, providing you stay well.

How to self-quarantine

If you are well, but you have been in close contact with a case of coronavirus you will need to self-quarantine. You will also need to self-quarantine if you have [returned from overseas](#). This is to stop other people from getting coronavirus.

Self-quarantine means avoiding contact with other people as much as possible by staying at home or in your hotel.

Other household members do not need to restrict their activities unless they are told to.

Don't

- Do not go to shops, school, university, work, park, library, movies, church/place of worship, GP, chemist, etc.
- Do not share your things.
- Do not use public transport or taxis.
- Do not invite visitors to your home.
- Do not go to meetings, social gatherings, group events or crowded places.
- Do not have visitors at your home.
- Do not go shopping – where possible, order your groceries online or have some family or friends drop them off.
- Keep away from older people, anyone with long-term medical conditions and pregnant women.
- Do not travel outside or within Australia.

If you are self-quarantining because someone in your household has symptoms of coronavirus or is confirmed to be positive, please read the guidelines for self-isolation below to protect yourself and your family as much as possible.

Self-isolation

Self-isolation means staying indoors and completely avoiding contact with other people because you have tested positive for COVID-19.

You must self-isolate:

- if you have [symptoms of coronavirus](#),
- before you get tested for coronavirus
- while you wait for test results
- if you have had a positive test result for coronavirus

How to self-isolate

If you develop symptoms you will need to [self-isolate](#) and phone your GP. **Do not go to a GP surgery or pharmacy.** The GP will assess you over the phone. If they think you need to be tested for coronavirus, they will arrange a test.

You will need to self-isolate if you have coronavirus or have [symptoms of coronavirus](#). This could be before you get tested for coronavirus, while you wait for test results or when a positive result is confirmed.

Most people with coronavirus will only have mild symptoms and will get well within weeks. Even though the symptoms are mild, you can still spread the virus to others.

If you have to self-isolate, stay indoors and avoid contact with other people. The people you live with will have to self-quarantine in the home.

Your doctor will advise you when you can stop self-isolating.

Do

- Stay at home, in a room with the window open.
- Keep away from others in your home as much as you can.
- Check your symptoms – call a doctor if they get worse.
- Phone your doctor if you need to – DO NOT VISIT THEM.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes using a tissue – clean your hands properly afterwards.
- Wash your hands properly and often.
- Use your own towel – do not share a towel with others.
- Clean your room every day with a household cleaner or disinfectant.

Don't

- Do not go to shops, school, university, work, park, library, movies, church/place of worship, GP, chemist, etc.
- Do not share your things.
- Do not use public transport or taxis.
- Do not invite visitors to your home.
- Do not go to meetings, social gatherings, group events or crowded places.
- Keep away from older people, anyone with long-term medical conditions and pregnant women.
- It's ok for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or supplies. Make sure you're not in the same room as them, when they do.
- Stay in touch with your GP or doctor
- If your symptoms develop or get worse, phone your GP.

If you live with other people and you are self-isolating

Stay in a room with a window you can open.

If you can, use a toilet and bathroom that no one else in the house uses.

If you have to share a bathroom with others, use the bathroom last and then clean it thoroughly.

Do not share any items you've used with other people.

These include:

- dishes
- drinking glasses
- cups
- eating utensils
- towels
- bedding

Meals

If possible, have someone leave your food on a tray at your bedroom door.

When you have finished, leave everything on the tray at the door.

This should be collected and put in a dishwasher and hands washed properly afterwards.

If you don't have a dishwasher:

- wash in hot soapy water, wearing rubber gloves
- leave to air dry
- wash the rubber gloves while you are still wearing them
- remove gloves and wash your hands

Wash your hands often

Wash your hands properly and often with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based hand rub.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.

Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.

[Wash your hands properly](#) – see our instruction sheet on this website

Use a detergent or disinfectant to clean your home

Many cleaning and disinfectant products sold in supermarkets can kill coronavirus on surfaces. Clean the surface as usual with a detergent, disinfectant or disinfectant wipe. For suitable surfaces, clean with detergent first and then follow with diluted bleach, such as White King Bleach at a ratio of one-part bleach, seven parts water.

This includes:

- counters
- table-tops
- doorknobs
- doorbell if getting deliveries
- bathroom fixtures (clean twice a day)
- toilets and toilet handles (clean twice a day)
- all sinks (clean twice a day)
- phones
- keyboards
- tablets
- bedside tables

If you have them, wear rubber gloves when cleaning surfaces, clothing or bedding. Wash the gloves while still wearing them, then clean your hands after you take them off.

Laundry

Put your laundry in a plastic bag. Have someone collect it from your bedroom door. If possible, they should wear rubber gloves.

They should:

- wash the laundry at the highest temperature for the material, with a laundry detergent
- clean all surfaces and the area around the washing machine
- wash the rubber gloves while still wearing them
- wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after removing the gloves
- You can wash clothes the usual the usual way. You don't need to separate out the clothes or towels from the sick person, but make sure you wash your hands after putting the washing into the machine.

DO NOT SHAKE clothes out before washing – this increases the risk of COVID-19 particles becoming airborne. Dry clothes well before putting them away. Use a disposable or washable clothes bin liner.

- If possible tumble dry and iron using a hot setting or steam iron.
- **Do not take laundry to a laundromat.**

General hygiene and cleaning

- After using the toilet, close the lid, flush and wash your hands. The virus can be detected in faeces and closing the lid before flushing reduces the risk of the virus spreading infection further.
- If there is only one toilet in the household, clean the toilet seat, flusher, tap, sink, door handles or any other surface they may have touched each time it has been used by the person who is sick.
- If you have two toilets, the sick person gets one and everyone else uses the other one. This is the same for the shower/bath.

- Change sheets and towels regularly, keep the towel of the sick person separate from other towels eg in their room, and have a separate towel on which they can wipe their hands after washing.
- Wash the floors once a day. This is especially important if you have young children.
- Regularly clean down hand-held devices such as gaming controls, mobile phones, keyboards, tablets (with alcohol spray or alcohol wipes).
- The sick person should be excused from setting the table, cooking, washing up and unpacking the dishwasher. They should also eat away from others who are well, preferably in their own room. They must wear a face mask when in the same room as people who are not sick.
- There should be absolutely no sharing of food or drink that has been in contact with the sick person. Leftovers need to be thrown in the bin.

Managing rubbish

The sick person should have their own rubbish with a disposable liner.

Put all the waste that you have used, including tissues and masks, in a plastic rubbish bag.

Wearing gloves, tie the bag when it is about three-quarters full. Place the plastic bag in a second bin bag and tie the bag.

Treat all cleaning waste in the same way.

Do not put the rubbish bags in your outdoor bin for 72 hours. Keep them separate and after 72 hours, the bags can be put out for collection in regular domestic waste.

If you have face masks

You may have to be in a room with someone who has coronavirus. If you do, and you have face masks, the person with coronavirus should wear the mask.

If you wear a mask, you should put it on and take it off in the room in which you are self-isolating. Wash your hands before you put it on.

Don't

- Do not touch the front of the mask when taking it off.
- Do not use a mask when it is wet.
- Do not reuse a mask.

Keeping well

Keep yourself mobile by getting up and moving around as much as possible. If you have a garden or backyard go out and get some fresh air, but keep at least 1.5 metres away from other people.

Self-isolation can be boring or frustrating. It may affect your mood and feelings. You may feel low, worried or have problems sleeping.

You may find it helps to stay in touch with friends or relatives by phone or on social media.

The outbreak of coronavirus disease may be stressful or people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Coping with stress will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger.

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. How you respond to the outbreak can depend on your background, the things that make you different from other people, and the community you live in.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Worry about your business, job and financial situation
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms.

Caring for a child or someone else in self-isolation

You may be caring for a child, family member or someone who needs support while they are in self-isolation. If you are, follow the advice above.

You should also:

- If you have an unwell young child, try to have one person providing their care. That person should be very careful about how they interact with others who are well.
- stay away from them as much as possible (at least 1 metre) and avoid touching them - use your phone to communicate
- wash your hands properly every time you have contact with the person
- if you have face masks, wear one and have them on when you have to be in the same room
- if you have to clean phlegm or spit from their face use a clean tissue, put it into a waste bag and wash your hands
- put them in a well-ventilated room alone
- limit their movement in the house
- get them to use a different toilet if possible
- limit the number of caregivers
- keep them away from older people, people with long-term conditions or pregnant women

If possible, only one person should look after the person self-isolating. Ideally, this would be someone who is in good health.

Call us at the Crafter Medical Centre on 8272 5533 if you require assistance, advice or if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row and we will facilitate a telephone appointment with your doctor.

Additional Crafter Medical Centre Resources:

Patient Guide to supporting yourself mentally and emotionally during a pandemic

Looking after the wellbeing of your children and teens

Coronavirus – Social Distancing, Looking after yourself and others

How to wash hands