

COVID-19: Self-isolation or Home isolation Factsheet for Close Contacts of People with COVID-19

Updated 2nd September 2020

This factsheet explains what self-isolation or home isolation means and what you can do to help keep yourself, your family, and your Community safe and healthy during COVID-19.

There is currently no vaccine or cure for COVID-19, so preventing its spread is the best way to help protect the Community. To slow the spread, some groups are being asked by public health professionals to self-isolate or isolate at home for 14 days. This includes people who have come into close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. More information for people tested for or diagnosed with COVID-19 is available [here](#).

Home isolation means you must stay at home. This is different to social distancing, which includes activities everyone in the community can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

What does self-isolation or home isolation mean?

- This means **staying at home** for 14 days from your last close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 even if you receive a negative swab test.
- This means **not going** to work, school, university, day care or any public areas.
- This means **not going** out to buy groceries or medications. Instead, you should ask friends or family to drop things off for you.
- This means **keeping as much distance** between yourself and other family members in your home. COVID-19 can be spread person to person for 24 hours before a person shows any symptoms
- You **should not use** public transport, taxis or ride-sharing services.
- You are allowed to go into your garden or balcony if you stay away from other family members.
- You should watch out for any symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath in yourself and in your family.
- For more information on home-isolation go to the NSW Health [website](#)

Can I still see a doctor?

Yes, you can still arrange to see your doctor!

- You can leave home-isolation to see a doctor. If you or someone else in home isolation starts to have COVID-19 symptoms you should be tested for COVID-19.
- If it is a medical emergency (e.g. feeling shortness of breath when you are resting), you should **call 000** and tell the ambulance you are in home-isolation for COVID-19.
- If the symptoms are less serious you can: call ahead before visiting your AMS or local doctor. Or visit a COVID-19 Respiratory Clinic or Emergency Department at your local Hospital.

How do I home isolate when I live with other people?

If you share your home with others, as much as possible, you should:

- **Wash your hands** properly with soap and water or hand sanitiser for at least 20 seconds. Wash your hands often throughout the day. Key moments include: after using the bathroom, after coughing or sneezing, and before and after putting on face masks.
- Keep separate from others in the household. Families might have to rearrange the household during this time and support you by bringing you meals to your room.
- Even if you are feeling well, **wear a surgical mask**, if you have one, when in a room with other people. Wear the mask properly by covering your nose and mouth at all times and avoid touching it.
- Use a **separate bathroom**, if available, or have your own **separate towel** for handwashing and bathing. Keep track by having a different coloured towel or keeping it apart from everyone else's. Clean the bathroom often.
- **Avoid shared or communal areas**, like the kitchen or living areas, and wear a surgical mask when moving through these spaces. You should wash your hands when leaving your room to go to the kitchen or another shared space.
- **Do not have visitors over** while someone in your home is self-isolating
- **Keep as much distance from other people as possible, when contact with other people is unavoidable.**
- **Clean** places you touch often, like door handles, phones and in the bathroom. You can use usual cleaning products according to their instructions.
- **If you are the person caring** for a well person in isolation, or someone who is sick, you should wash your hands after you have touched any item they have been in contact with, for example, the plates that the person ate off.

The local public health unit can investigate options for alternate accommodation if you can't separate yourself from other people in your house. Phone: 1300 066 055 for more information.

Please note: If you are sharing a house with someone who is home-isolating you do not need to home isolate provided you can separate yourself from other members of the household. However, if you have been in close contact with the person you will be required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days from the day you were tested.

Stay connected and look after yourself

- Ask a friend or family member to be on call and ready to help while you have to stay home.
- Being away from your family and community can be hard, so having someone to have a yarn with over the phone or video calling one another is important for your wellbeing. Make sure you reach out to one of your mob or call lifeline on 13 11 14 or beyond blue on 1300 22 4636 for free confidential counselling.
- It's ok to reach out for help getting groceries, medicines and other essentials. The best thing you can do to protect community is to stay at home and let others pick things up for you and drop them off at your door.
- Keep up a normal routine as much as possible. Ask your kid's school for lessons and homework so they can keep learning from home.
- Exercise regularly at home. Walking around your backyard, painting, singing and dancing can help relieve stress.