

# Self-isolation or Home-isolation for COVID-19

To help slow the spread of COVID-19, some groups are being asked by public health professionals to self-isolate or home-isolate for 14 days. These include people who have travelled overseas or come into close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19.

This factsheet explains what home-isolation means and what you can do to help protect yourself, your family and your community and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Home-isolation is different from social distancing, which includes activities everyone in the community can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19. For more information on home-isolation go to the NSW Health [website](#).

## What is COVID-19?

- COVID-19 is a new coronavirus first seen in China. It has now spread globally.
- COVID-19 spreads mainly from person-to-person contact, or from the droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes and through contaminated hands, objects and surfaces.
- There is currently no vaccine or treatment for COVID-19, so preventing its spread is the best way to help protect the community.
- Currently not everyone can be tested. Only people at high risk of COVID-19 who develop symptoms can be tested. This includes close contacts of confirmed cases.
- For more information call the free National Coronavirus Information 24/7 helpline on 1800 020 080.

## What does self-isolation or home-isolation mean?

- This means **staying at home** for 14 days from when you returned from overseas or your last contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- 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 a safe distance** of about 2m from other family members in your home. COVID-19 can be spread person to person for 24 hours before a person show any symptoms
- You **should not use** public transport, taxis or ride-sharing services.
- You should watch out for any symptoms of COVID-19 in yourself and in your family.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Other early symptoms include: fatigue, runny nose, chills, body aches or diarrhoea.

## 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.

- Visit a COVID-19 Respiratory Clinic or Emergency Department at your local Hospital. When you arrive tell them you have been in home-isolation for COVID-19

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

Even if you are feeling well, you can become infectious at any point in the 14 days after exposure to COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can be infectious even before they develop symptoms, so it is important to take care of yourself and others around you.

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

- **Wash your hands** properly with soap and water or hand sanitizer 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. If you can, **stay in one room**. Families might have to rearrange the household during this time and support you by bringing you meals to your room.
- Make sure you do not share a room with people who are at risk of more serious illness, such as Elders and people living with health problems.
- 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.
- **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.
- **Avoid having visitors** to the home while you are in isolation. If visitors do come, try to meet outside on the veranda or at the front gate.
- **Keep a safe distance** of about 2m from other people. When saying hello and goodbye to your mob, wave instead of hugging, kissing or shaking hands.
- **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.

## 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 your mob to check in and see how they're going as well.
- 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.
- You can leave the house to go for a walk if you are well and do not have any symptoms of COVID-19. You should keep a safe distance of about 2m from others.