COVID-19
Isolation requirements

24 September 2020

Why am I being isolated?

If you have been asked to isolate yourself in your own home, residence, hotel or other accommodation it is because you have or may have COVID-19 and your clinician thinks it is necessary. You are being isolated to help reduce the spread of this virus to other people.

If you are confirmed as having COVID-19, you have been assessed as being well enough to be self-caring and able to seek medical attention if your symptoms become worse.

What do I need to do?

Stay indoors

You are advised not to leave your home, residence, hotel or accommodation except to seek or receive medical care.

If you need to travel to get to your general practice, hospital or testing site, travel alone and use personal transport where possible. If you are unable to drive yourself, see if a member of your household/family or a friend can take you. You must:

- wear a mask
- sit in the back seat
- maintain physical distancing as much as possible
- handle your own belongings
- use hand sanitiser.

If you are unable to organise travel in a private vehicle, you can use a taxi or ride share service with the above-mentioned precautions. When you arrive at your doctor, hospital or other testing location, tell the healthcare professionals again that you have or may have COVID-19.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek medical attention if you believe your illness is worsening. Call ahead to advise that you are in isolation because you have or may have COVID-19. Your healthcare provider will advise you of the steps you need to take when you attend your appointment to prevent others from becoming ill. If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, call 000, ask for an ambulance and notify the officers that you have or may have COVID-19.

Reduce the chance of spread to others in your household

- Stay away from others

Only people who are essential for caring for you should stay in the home, residence, hotel or accommodation. Restrict visits from other people who do not need to be in your home. Elderly
people and those with compromised immune systems or chronic illnesses, such as asthma or diabetes, are at greater risk of more serious illness with COVID-19 and should stay elsewhere if they are able to.

As much as possible, you should stay in a room away from others, sleep in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if possible. Avoid shared or communal areas. While unwell, avoid close contact with others, including touching, kissing, hugging and other intimate contact.

If it is not possible for you to live separately to others in the household while you are infectious with COVID-19, your household members may need to continue to quarantine after you are well.

- **Pay attention to hygiene**

  Always cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough, preferably with a tissue or your sleeve when you don’t have a tissue. Dispose of any used tissues straight away in a rubbish bin. It is very important to wash your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds after you cough, sneeze, blow your nose or take off gloves and masks. You can use alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty.

- **Do not share household items**

  You should not share cups, glasses, plates, utensils, towels or bedding with others in your home. These items should not be used by others until they are cleaned thoroughly with detergent and water or in a dishwasher or washing machine. See below for further advice about household cleaning.

- **Wear a mask**

  If you have COVID-19, you should avoid being in the same room with others. If you do need to be in the same room, always wear a face mask (if available). Where a mask is not available it is important to keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres away from other household members. Always wash your hands with soap and running water and dry your hands thoroughly or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser before and after fitting your face mask.

**What do care givers and household members need to know?**

- Frequent hand cleaning with soap and running water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser when hands are not visibly soiled is the most important measure carers of a sick person can do to avoid getting infected.

- Maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres from the sick person as much as possible.

- When able, open doors and windows to ensure there is good airflow in shared areas.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces such as tabletops, doorknobs, taps, sinks, phones, keyboards, remote controls and bedside tables every day with a normal household cleaning product. Pay particular attention to the kitchen, laundry and bathroom.

- Thoroughly clean any surfaces that have blood, body fluid and or secretions on them straight away.

- Wear disposable gloves when dealing with any body fluids (especially sputum or phlegm, mucous and other respiratory secretions) of a person in isolation. Straight away after each use dispose of the gloves into a separate plastic bag and place it in the bin. Wash your hands straight away after removing and disposing of the gloves.
• Always follow the safety advice and instructions for dilutions or preparation of cleaning products and disinfectants.

• When washing the isolated person's laundry, use the warmest recommended cycle for the item of clothing, bedding or towels. Wear disposable gloves when handling these dirty items. Dispose of the gloves straight away after use and then wash your hands.

Do carers or household members of a confirmed case need to be isolated as well?

The people you live with and other close contacts may need to remain at home in quarantine if you are a confirmed case. The local public health unit will assess and advise them if and how long they need to remain in quarantine.

Do carers or household members of someone who is waiting on a test result need to be isolated?

If you are waiting on a test result, the people you live with and other close contacts do not need to be in quarantine, unless specifically advised by the local public health unit, but should stay away from the sick person as much as possible. If the test result is positive, they may be assessed as a close contact and then may need to be in quarantine.

When will I be able to be released from isolation after being confirmed with COVID-19?

Your healthcare provider will advise you when you are no longer infectious and can come out of isolation. There are additional requirements for healthcare and aged care workers.

Suspected cases who test negative to COVID-19

If you were being tested for COVID-19 and your test is negative and you are well, you can resume your usual activities in accordance with the current government directions.

If you were in quarantine because you were issued with a quarantine notice, you must remain in quarantine until the end date written on the notice regardless of the negative result. This is because you may still develop a COVID-19 infection.

You need to continue good hygiene practices to help stay free of illness and follow the physical distancing advice for the general community.

If you become unwell, you need to seek medical advice straight away.

What support is available if I need to be in isolation?

You can get food and medication while in isolation by doing the following:

• Ask friends or family members you don’t live with to get food and medication to leave at your door.

• If you need a prescription filled arrange this with your usual pharmacist or GP. They can then deliver it to your house or you can let your friend or family member know where to collect the medication. Read more about getting medicines and accessing health services.
• Arrange a food delivery service. Have all food left outside your house. Do not let any delivery person into your nominated premises.

• Home care workers and other providers of essential services like nurses are exempt from restrictions to enter your home. However, if you receive these services it is important that you let the service providers know that you are in isolation.

• Contact the Community Recovery Hotline on 1800 173 349 for help.

Further information

• If you require further information, please contact your healthcare provider or 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84).

• If you or anybody in the household is experiencing a medical emergency, call 000 and notify the officers that you are currently isolated because you have or may have COVID-19.
