

# Factsheet

## Home isolation guidance for close contacts and recently returned travellers

You need to isolate yourself in your home or hotel if you have been:

- in contact with a person sick with COVID-19 infection
- travelled overseas in the past 14 days.

Last updated: 15 March 2020

### How long do I need to be in home isolation?



If you have been overseas, you need to be isolated for 14 days from the day you returned.

If you have been in contact with a person with a COVID-19 infection while they were ill, you need to be isolated for 14 days after you last saw that person.

This applies to everyone, even if you have no symptoms.

### Getting to your home or hotel

If you are currently well, or if you have minor symptoms and have been tested for COVID-19 after arriving in Australia and your test result is negative, you can travel directly to your home or hotel by public transport, taxi or ride-share, or continue with onward flights.

**Remember that you must wear a surgical mask at all times while travelling to your home or hotel.**

Once you get to your home or hotel you must restrict activities outside your home/hotel, except for seeking medical care. You should not go to work, school/university/childcare, the gym, or public areas, and you should not use public transport, taxis, or ride-sharing services.

If you need to seek medical care call ahead, and make sure you wear a surgical mask when attending.

### Monitor symptoms

When in home isolation, you should monitor yourself for symptoms. Watch for:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)

- other early symptoms to watch for are chills, body aches, sore throat, headache and runny nose, muscle pain, or diarrhoea.

If you or someone else in home isolation develops severe symptoms and it is a medical emergency (e.g. shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing) you should phone **000**. Tell the ambulance staff that you are in home isolation for COVID-19.

If the symptoms are less serious you should:

- Call your doctor or healthdirect on 1800 022 222. When you call, tell them where you have travelled, or that you are a close contact of a person with COVID-19.  
**or**
- Visit your local Emergency Department. When you arrive, immediately tell staff where you have travelled, or that you are a close contact of a person with COVID-19.

When you have an appointment you should travel directly to the medical centre or emergency department and wear a surgical mask.

If you develop symptoms, you should also make sure you wear a surgical mask while in the presence of other household members, even if they are also in home isolation.

## Separate yourself from the other people in your home

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

- 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.

Make sure that you do not share a room with people who are at risk of severe disease, such as elderly people and those who have heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.

People who do not have an essential need to be in the home should not visit while you are in isolation.

## Wash your hands

You should wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially:

- before entering an area used by other people
- after using the bathroom
- after coughing or sneezing
- before putting on and after removing face masks.

Alternatively, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty.

## Wear your mask properly

Make sure it covers your nose and mouth at all times avoid touching your mask unnecessarily.

## Can I go into the garden or go for a walk?

You can go into your private garden or courtyard. Wear a surgical mask if there is anyone there who is not also in home isolation. If you live in an apartment you can go onto your private balcony if you have one. You can go into common garden areas while wearing a surgical mask. Please go quickly through any common areas on the way there.

You are also allowed to leave their house to go for a walk or exercise outdoors if you are well and you stay away from other people.

## Tips for you and your family to help cope with home isolation

Being in home isolation can be frightening, particularly for young children. We've put together some tips for coping.

- Talk to the other members of the family about COVID-19 to reduce anxiety. You can find accurate, up to date information on the [NSW Health Website - 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 lesson information and homework by 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 for long.
- 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 may be able to order groceries and medicines (including prescription medicines) online or by telephone.

## More information and support

For more information and support while in home isolation:

- Call the National Coronavirus Health Information line on 1800 020 080.
- Visit the [NSW Health Website - COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)

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Contact page owner: [Health Protection NSW](#)