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Managing COVID-19 at home

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About this guide

This guide is for people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have mild to moderate symptoms.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you must follow the instructions given to you by your local public health unit, health department, hospital or general practitioner (GP).

Most people with COVID-19 will recover without needing to go to hospital or any special treatment.

If you have no symptoms, or your symptoms are mild to moderate, it is usually safe for you to isolate and manage your symptoms at home. If you have risk factors for more severe disease you may be linked in with a hospital service or directly with your GP, nurse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner and the local public health unit.

Remember: It is normal for COVID-19 symptoms to change over time. Some people will have no symptoms and some people's symptoms might become worse over a couple of weeks. This guide is designed to help you understand what to expect when you are diagnosed with COVID-19, and what to look out for so that you know if your COVID-19 is getting worse.

You will need to continue to monitor your own health as well throughout this time. To help you to monitor your health at home, you may think about buying a thermometer and a pulse oximeter to help you do this.

Do not wait for your health provider to contact you if you have symptoms that are causing you concern.

My COVID-19 action plan and symptom diary

You can [download the *My COVID-19 action plan* and *My daily symptom diary* here \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx) and print it at home or save it on your computer.

We recommend that you share this with a household member or a friend you trust who can regularly check in with you each day while you are in isolation. If you need to speak with a healthcare professional, or if you call for an ambulance, then show them this action plan.

You should fill out the [My daily symptom diary \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx) at least once every day while you are isolating at home. It will help you to keep a check on how you are feeling.

What do I need to do when isolating at home?

Anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 must [isolate \(https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/isolation-for-coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/isolation-for-coronavirus-covid-19) to prevent the spread of infection. Isolating when you are infectious – which means that you have the virus and can pass it on to others – protects your family, friends and the wider community from COVID-19. Isolation is a public health requirement.

Isolation involves:

- staying at home, unless you need to leave to get medical care or if you feel unsafe in your home
 - do not attend work or school, do not visit public areas, and do not travel on public transport, in taxis or ride-share services
 - always call ahead before attending a healthcare or family violence service or police. You must advise them that you have COVID-19
 - in many cases you will be able to receive medical care using telehealth (using a phone or video), and medicines can be arranged by your pharmacist or GP to be delivered to your home
- living in a separate room away from other people in your household
 - if you can stay in a separate, well-ventilated room away from the other people in your household who are COVID-19 negative, you should do so
 - if you cannot isolate in a separate room, avoid shared spaces in the house as much as possible and wear a mask when moving through shared areas, and wipe down any surfaces you touch
 - if you can, use a separate bathroom that others do not use. If you share a bathroom, wipe down any surface you touch and flush the toilet with a closed lid
- ensuring others do not enter your home, unless they are providing necessary medical or personal care, or emergency services
 - the people who usually live in your house with you can continue to stay there if they are unable to live somewhere else during this time
 - if they stay in the home with you, they are considered to be household/close contacts (refer to [What information do I give to my caregiver and \(#_bookmark8\) \(https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/managing-covid-19-at-home/what-information-do-i-give-my-caregiver-and-other-people-in-the-household?#_bookmark8\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/managing-covid-19-at-home/what-information-do-i-give-my-caregiver-and-other-people-in-the-household?#_bookmark8))
 - if you have a household contact who has a weak immune system, is elderly or has another risk for severe COVID-19, contact your [state/territory health department \(https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments\)](https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments) to see if they can help with finding them places to stay
 - having groceries and other essential items delivered to your home
 - in most states/territories, household/close contacts are no longer required to isolate unless they also test positive to COVID-19. Therefore, they may be able to do the

- grocery shopping and access essential items for you.
- You should also consider arranging delivery of groceries and other essential items
- ask a friend or neighbour to bring essential items to your door
- your council might also provide services to help you during this time
- accessing services you require
 - if you have significant care-giving needs that you are unable to manage due to contracting COVID-19, supports are available through your [state/territory health \(https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments\)](https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments) or [Centrelink social work services \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/social-work-services/how-contact-social-worker\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/social-work-services/how-contact-social-worker)
 - to access a social worker, call the same number you use to call Centrelink or the Centrelink families line on 136 150 and ask for a social worker
 - if you require a translation service, call the [Centrelink multilingual phone service \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language/products/multilingual-phone-service\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language/products/multilingual-phone-service) on 131 202 and ask for a social worker.

If you need help managing addictions while isolating at home, speak with your doctor or nurse.

Supports are available. You will need official clearance before you leave isolation (refer to [What do I do at the end of my isolation? \(https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/managing-covid-19-at-home/what-do-i-do-at-the-end-of-my-isolation\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/managing-covid-19-at-home/what-do-i-do-at-the-end-of-my-isolation)).

What can I do to stop the spread of the virus?

COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact, through respiratory droplets and airborne particles that are created and sprayed when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. To help protect other people in your household, you should do the following:¹

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
 - practise good hand hygiene by washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
 - use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available, and your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Wear a face mask
 - you should wear a mask whenever you are in contact with other people in your house. Ideally, this is a P2/N95 mask. You can buy this from the pharmacy over the phone or online and have it delivered
 - the mask should cover your mouth and nose
 - do not touch the mask while you are wearing it
 - when the mask gets wet or dirty, replace it immediately with a clean, dry mask
 - other people in the household or people providing care to you should wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose when they are in the room with you
 - remember that the mask will have the virus on it from your body. You need to make sure you place it directly into a bin so that it does not rest anywhere else and it will not be touched by anyone else.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
 - every day, clean and disinfect any surfaces that you touch frequently, such as doorknobs, light switches, handles, toilets, taps and sinks
 - wipe down surfaces with detergent, followed by a disinfectant (or use a two-in-one product with both cleaning and disinfecting properties).
 - if someone else is cleaning for you, they should wear a mask and gloves while doing so
 - wash hands thoroughly after completing this task, even if gloves were used.
- Reduce clutter
 - to make cleaning as easy as possible, consider reducing clutter in the room in which you are staying.
- Practise good cough and sneeze hygiene
 - everyone in the household should cough or sneeze into their elbow, or cover their mouth and nose with a tissue
 - wash your hands after discarding the tissue.
- Continue to breastfeed if you are already, or if you would like to begin
 - you should wear a mask while doing this and maintain hand hygiene.

Until you are told you will not spread the virus, **you should not:**

- kiss or have sex

- these have a high risk of passing on the virus
- share personal items
 - you should use separate dishes, cups, cutlery, towels, bedding and other items so that others in the household do not use them
 - after use, wash all these items separately on the hottest possible setting.

Reference

1. [Department of Health. Protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Canberra: DoH, 2022 \(https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/protect-yourself-and-others\)](https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/protect-yourself-and-others) [Accessed 16 May 2022].

Do I need to take medicines for my COVID-19?

Most people will not require medicine to treat their COVID-19. However, for some people who are at risk of more severe disease, it may be appropriate for your GP (or other doctor) to prescribe you antivirals to treat COVID-19.

Two medicines are now available – molnupiravir (sold as [Lagevrio \(https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/lagevrio-cmi.pdf\)](https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/lagevrio-cmi.pdf)) and nirmatrelvir plus ritonavir (sold as [Paxlovid \(https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/paxlovid-cmi.pdf\)](https://www.tga.gov.au/sites/default/files/paxlovid-cmi.pdf)). You would only be prescribed one of these medicines not both.

To be prescribed these medicines you need to have confirmed COVID-19, have mild to moderate symptoms, be able to start these medicines within five days of your first symptom, and:

- be 65 years of age or older, with two other risk factors for severe disease; or
- be 75 years of age or older with one other risk factor; or
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and are 50 years of age or older with two other risk factors for severe disease; or
- be moderately to severely immunocompromised.¹

If you meet the criteria above, it is very important you contact your GP (or other doctor) as soon as you know you have COVID-19 or have symptoms so they can assess whether these medicines would be appropriate for you.

Reference

1. [Department of Health. Oral treatments for COVID-19. Canberra: DoH, 2022 \(https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments#oral-treatments\)](https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments#oral-treatments) [Accessed 18 May 2022].

What can I do to help manage my COVID-19 at home?

Each day, you should record your symptoms using the [My daily symptom diary \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx).

You should watch out for worsening symptoms and follow your [My COVID-19 action plan \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx).

Try to get plenty of rest, drink water and eat well. You can still do moderate exercise if you feel well enough (within your home and/or garden).

Paracetamol or ibuprofen could be used for symptom relief if you have taken these before and have had no problems. Avoid ibuprofen if you are pregnant. Oral rehydration solution can be used if you have bad nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.¹

If you have other ongoing medical needs that are impacted by your COVID-19 diagnosis you should check-in with your regular healthcare provider. Your GP can advise you of any other medicines that might be needed to manage your symptoms. Make sure your GP and nurse know exactly what medicines you are taking.

Reference

1. [National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce. Management of adults with mild COVID-19 \(version 42.1\). Melbourne: National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce, 2022 \(https://covid19evidence.net.au/#clinical-flowcharts\)](https://covid19evidence.net.au/#clinical-flowcharts) [Accessed 16 May 2022].

What symptoms might I have with COVID-19?

Common symptoms



Most people with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms. The most commonly reported symptoms include:



- fever
- fatigue
- loss of taste and/or smell
- respiratory symptoms
- coughing
- increased phlegm or sputum.



Other symptoms associated with COVID-19 can include:



- headache
- sore throat
- mild shortness of breath
- muscle or joint pains
- runny nose
- chills
- intermittent nausea/vomiting
- intermittent diarrhoea.¹



Severe symptoms

If you develop any of the following symptoms (or any other symptoms recorded in the severe symptoms section of your [My COVID-19 action plan \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx)), call (or ask someone else to call) emergency services on 000 immediately. Tell the phone operator that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have severe symptoms, and that you need an ambulance.

The following symptoms could indicate more severe or serious illness, so they should be treated in a hospital:*

- worsening shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- blue lips or face
- pain or pressure in the chest
- cold and clammy, or pale and mottled, skin
- fainting or collapse
- being more confused
- becoming difficult to wake up
- little or no urine output – less urine than usual, even though you have been drinking lots of fluid
- coughing up blood.²
- your oxygen level is 92%* or less when you test using the pulse oximeter, even if you feel okay (see how to check this in the next section of the guide)
- respiratory rate of more than 30 beats per minute*
- heart rate staying at or above 120 beats per minute*

*Your individual age and general health may mean these symptoms are not all relevant or may need to be adapted. If you are managing your COVID-19 with assistance from a GP your GP might also tell you to look out for other severe symptoms that have been added to your [My COVID-19 action plan \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx), and will update the action plan.

References

1. [Communicable Diseases Network Australia. Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): CDNA national guidelines for public health units. Version 6.7. Canberra: Department of Health, 2022 \(https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm\)](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm) [Accessed 16 May 2022].
2. [Department of Health. Oral treatments for COVID-19. Canberra: DoH, 2022 \(https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments#oral-treatments\)](https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/treatments#oral-treatments) [Accessed 18 May 2022].

How do I check my oxygen level, heart rate (pulse),respiratory rate (breathing) and temperature?

It is important to know how to use this equipment to monitor your health at home.

It is helpful for others in your home to also know how to use this equipment to assist you, especially if you become quite ill.

Oxygen level

You could be asked to check your oxygen levels once or twice a day using a small device called a pulse oximeter. The pulse oximeter clips over your finger. It does not hurt and only takes a minute to check.

Not all people with COVID-19 require a pulse oximeter.

You might be given a pulse oximeter by your general practice, hospital or other care provider. You can also purchase one from a pharmacy over the phone or online, and have it delivered to your home.

Some **smartphones/smartwatches** have a pulse oximeter function. These are not accurate and **should not be used**.¹

If you are looking after a child with COVID-19 and are asked to monitor oxygen levels, you might require a pulse oximeter specially designed for children. You can discuss this with your GP or nurse.

When testing your oxygen:

1. Remove any nail polish or false nails (these can interfere with the device)
2. Wash your hands with warm water and thoroughly dry them (the device works best when your hands are warm)
3. Sit in an upright position
4. Give your fingers a wiggle and rub to get the blood flowing
5. Attach the clip to one of your fingers so that the tip of your finger is touching the end of the device. The palm of your hand should be pointing down, and the screen of the pulse oximeter should be pointing up so you can read it
6. Keep your hand and fingers still
7. Breathe normally and restfully
8. After waiting for one minute, record the number next to the SpO2 symbol



Your oxygen level should be 95% or higher. If it is lower than this, then it could be a sign you need a check-up with your GP or nurse, or that it is safer for you to be in hospital.

If you are not getting a reading, or if the reading is under 95%, give your fingers a wiggle, take a few breaths and try the device on a different finger.

If it is still low, follow your My COVID-19 action plan.

Heart rate (pulse)

Your pulse oximeter can also check your heart rate. Your pulse is your heart rate, and this is the number showing next to the PR (pulse rate) or BPM (beats per minute) symbol.

Some smartphones/smartwatches have a heart rate function, but these are not accurate and should not be used.

If you do not have a pulse oximeter, you can check your heart rate manually by placing your index and middle fingers of one hand on the opposite wrist under the thumb.

With your fingers lightly on your wrist, you can count the number of beats that you feel over a 30-second period of time. You then need to calculate the beats per minute by doubling the number of beats you counted over 30 seconds. This rate is your heart rate.



Respiratory rate (breathing)

Try to relax and breathe normally. Set a timer for 30 seconds, and start to count the number of times you breathe in and out before the time is up. Double this number and this will be your respiratory rate per minute.

If you cannot check your own respiratory rate, think about if you are:

- breathless when you walk
- breathless when you are sitting
- breathless when you are speaking.

Write in your [My daily symptom diary \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx) next to 'breathlessness', if you feel it is getting better, worse or remains the same.

Temperature

If you do not have a thermometer at home, you can buy one from a pharmacy over the phone or online, and have it delivered to your home. Each thermometer is different, so follow the directions from the manufacturer.

Record your oxygen level, pulse, respiratory rate and temperature in your [My daily symptom diary \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx) at least once a day.

Reference

1. Greenhalgh T, Knight M, Inada-Kim M, et al. Remote management of COVID-19 using home pulse oximetry and virtual ward support. *BMJ* 2021;372:n677.

What can I do to take care of my mental health and wellbeing?

Being in isolation can be stressful. If you have pre-existing mental health issues or past experiences of trauma or detention, it might be particularly difficult.

Speak to your GP, nurse or usual healthcare provider if your mental health worsens or if you have any concerns. They are there to support your physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Here are some ways you can look after your mental health during this time:

- **Keep in touch with friends, family and community.** Maintain contact with loved ones via telephone, email and social media, or by using video technologies, such as WhatsApp and Zoom.
- **Contact local community and religious organisations.** These organisations can provide support services, especially if you are socially isolated.
- **Develop or maintain a daily routine.** This could include showering and getting dressed each day, having regular mealtimes and exercising (within your home or garden). It is important not to lie in bed all day.
- **Learn more about COVID-19 from trustworthy and credible sources.** Understanding more about the virus might help you feel less anxious.
- **Use the time to do new things.** Time in isolation can provide an opportunity to try activities, such as craft, drawing or reading. Try to avoid being in front of a computer or phone screen all day.
- **Spend time outdoors.** If you have a private courtyard, balcony or garden, spend some time there each day to get some fresh air.

You can also access mental health services, including:

- [Head to Health \(https://headtohealth.gov.au/\)](https://headtohealth.gov.au/) – provides links to trusted Australian mental health online and phone supports, resources and treatment options. This useful website also has online programs and forums, as well as a range of digital information resources
- [Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service \(https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/\)](https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/) – provides information, advice and strategies to help people manage their wellbeing and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic
- [healthdirect \(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-and-mental-health\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-19-and-mental-health) – provides information on maintaining your wellbeing when isolating, and links to mental health supports
- [Kids Helpline \(https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus\)](https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus) – provides resources on mental health for children during isolation
- resources [in many languages \(https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre-tmhc/community/in-your-language\)](https://www.dhi.health.nsw.gov.au/transcultural-mental-health-centre-tmhc/community/in-your-language), which have been developed by the Transcultural Mental Health Centre
- in-language support through the National Coronavirus Helpline by calling 1800 020 080 and choosing the option for translation services
- 1800RESPECT by [phone or web chat \(https://www.1800respect.org.au/help-and-support/telephone-and-online-counselling/\)](https://www.1800respect.org.au/help-and-support/telephone-and-online-counselling/), when it is safe to do so, if you are experiencing domestic

violence. 1800RESPECT is available 24 hours/seven days a week, and can provide you with confidential support, counselling and information.

What do I tell my work, and what financial supports are available if I cannot work?

- You do not have to tell your employer that you have COVID-19, unless you were at work when you might have been infectious. Remember that you cannot leave your house to go to work during your isolation period.
- If you are well enough, you can continue to work from home if your job allows during your isolation period.
- If your work cannot be done from home, or you are not well enough to work from home, and cannot earn an income, you might be able to get the [Pandemic Leave \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment) [Disaster Payment \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/pandemic-leave-disaster-payment).

What do I do at the end of my isolation?

Each state and territory has different rules around how long you will need to isolate for and what you need to do in the days and weeks following.

Find local information on your state or territory health department website:

- [Australian Capital Territory \(https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/isolation-information-for-people-with-confirmed-covid-19\)](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/isolation-information-for-people-with-confirmed-covid-19)
- [New South Wales \(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/self-isolation-rules\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/testing/self-isolation-rules)
- [Northern Territory \(https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/living-with-covid-19/covid-19-positive\)](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/living-with-covid-19/covid-19-positive)
- [Queensland \(https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/i-have-covid\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/i-have-covid)
- [South Australia \(https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/testing+and+tracing/information+about+a+positive+result+for+covid-19\)](https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/testing+and+tracing/information+about+a+positive+result+for+covid-19)
- [Tasmania \(https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/information-for-positive-cases\)](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/information-for-positive-cases)
- [Victoria \(https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases\)](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases)
- [Western Australia \(https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus\)](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus)

At the end of your isolation period, you will need to continue to follow the COVID-safe rules and restrictions that apply in your area.

Some people feel anxious after they are allowed to leave their home again after being isolated with COVID-19. Some people find it hard to be around other people again. You can be confident that you are no longer infectious after your period of isolation has been completed and the local public health unit has confirmed you are safe to leave your home. You might find that you need to reassure your family and friends about this. It is natural for people to find these conversations difficult sometimes.

What should I do if I have ongoing symptoms?

You might have heard of 'long COVID'. Long COVID is when your COVID-19 symptoms continue for some months after you were first infected with COVID-19. These symptoms include feeling tired, having a persistent cough, having trouble thinking clearly, depression or anxiety. Most people who have COVID-19 recover completely within a few weeks, but 5–15% of people who have had COVID-19 will still have some symptoms after three months.^{1,2}

You should have a check-up with your GP if you are experiencing ongoing symptoms and/or need any additional support.

You can also read the RACGP's guide on [managing post-COVID-19 symptoms](https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/patient-resource-managing-post-covid-19-symptoms). (<https://www.racgp.org.au/clinical-resources/covid-19-resources/patient-resources/patient-resource-managing-post-covid-19-symptoms>)

References

1. Liu B, Jayasundara D, Pye V, et al. Whole of population-based cohort study of recovery time from COVID-19 in New South Wales, Australia. *Lancet Reg Health West Pac* 2021;100193.
2. [Office of National Statistics. Prevalence of ongoing symptoms following coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection in the UK: 1 April 2021. UK: Office for National Statistics, 2021. Available at \[www.bulletins.gov.uk/prevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infection/1april2021#measuring-the-data\]\(https://www.bulletins.gov.uk/prevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infection/1april2021#measuring-the-data\) \(<http://sons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/>\) \[Accessed 24 November 2021\]](https://www.bulletins.gov.uk/prevalenceofongoingsymptomsfollowingcoronaviruscovid19infection/1april2021#measuring-the-data)

When do I get vaccinated (or have my booster) after having COVID-19?

People who have had COVID-19 still need to be vaccinated to be protected.

If you are not already vaccinated, or aren't up-to-date with your vaccinations, you should receive your next COVID-19 vaccine three months following your confirmed infection.¹

You can use the [Vaccine Clinic Finder \(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-vaccine-clinic-finder\)](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covid-19-vaccine-clinic-finder) to find a clinic and make a booking for your COVID-19 vaccine or booster dose.

Reference

1. [Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation. Clinical guidance for COVID-19 vaccine providers. Canberra: ATAGI, 2022 \(https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance\)](https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/advice-for-providers/clinical-guidance) [Accessed 16 May 2022].

What information do I give my caregiver and other people in the household?

Current evidence suggests that a person with COVID-19 can infect other people up to three days before experiencing any symptoms.¹ This means that the infected person can infect others before they know that they are infectious. A person with COVID-19 is also considered infectious until the end of their isolation period.

Caregivers and other household members who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 will need to follow the requirements outlined by their state/territory:

- [Australia Capital Territory \(https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19\)](https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy/exposed-to-covid19)
- [New South Wales \(https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/people-exposed-to-covid#:~:text=What%20are%20my%20legal%20requirements,do%20this%20by%20NSW%20Health.\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/management/people-exposed-to-covid#:~:text=What%20are%20my%20legal%20requirements,do%20this%20by%20NSW%20Health.)
- [Northern Territory \(https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/living-with-covid-19/close-contacts\)](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/living-with-covid-19/close-contacts)
- [Queensland \(https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/exposed-to-covid/close-contacts\)](https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/stay-informed/exposed-to-covid/close-contacts)
- [South Australia \(https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/cases+and+contacts/close+contact+advice/close+contact+advice\)](https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/cases+and+contacts/close+contact+advice/close+contact+advice)
- [Tasmania \(https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/contact-tracing/advice-for-contacts#:~:text=What%20you%20are%20required%20to,symptoms%20develop%20at%20any%20time.\)](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/contact-tracing/advice-for-contacts#:~:text=What%20you%20are%20required%20to,symptoms%20develop%20at%20any%20time.)
- [Victoria \(https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts\)](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts)
- [Western Australia \(https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-close-contacts#:~:text=You%20are%20a%20close%20contact%20if%20you%20had%20the%20following,you%20were%20not%20wearing%20masks.\)](https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/A_E/Coronavirus/COVID19-close-contacts#:~:text=You%20are%20a%20close%20contact%20if%20you%20had%20the%20following,you%20were%20not%20wearing%20masks.)

Caregivers and others in the household should also read the above information about how they can help to stop the spread of the virus.

Reference

1. [Communicable Diseases Network Australia. Coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): CDNA national guidelines for public health units. Version 6.7. Canberra: Department of Health, 2022 \(https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm\)](https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/cdna-song-novel-coronavirus.htm) [Accessed 16 May 2022].

I am a parent, guardian or carer of a child with COVID-19 – What do I need to know?

Having your child diagnosed with COVID-19 can be stressful for you and your family.

It is important to remember that, so far in Australia, there have not been many hospital admissions for children due to COVID-19 severity. Severe disease is rare.

Children can have similar symptoms to adults. Many children with COVID-19 will have no symptoms, or only mild symptoms similar to a cold.¹

If you are worried about your child at any stage, contact your general practice for review as soon as possible. If they are showing severe symptoms, call 000 as per your child's [My COVID-19 action plan \(https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx\)](https://www.racgp.org.au/FSDEDEV/media/documents/RACGP/Coronavirus/COVID-19-action-plan-and-daily-symptom-diary.docx).

Reference

1. [Murdoch Children's Research Institute. Research brief – COVID-19 and child and adolescent health. Melbourne: MCRI, 2021 documents/covid-19-and-child-and-adolescent-health-140921.pdf \(http://www.mcri.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/\)](http://www.mcri.edu.au/sites/default/files/media/brief_COVID-19_and_child_and_adolescent_health_Melbourne_MCRI_2021_documents/covid-19-and-child-and-adolescent-health-140921.pdf)
[Accessed 23 November 2021].

Where can I find information in my language (other than English)?

- Healthdirect have [COVID-19 resources \(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-clarity\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-clarity) in a number of languages
- COVID-19 resources in other languages are also available from the [Department of Health \(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated?f%5B0%5D=field_related_conditions_disease%3A9669\)](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/translated?f%5B0%5D=field_related_conditions_disease%3A9669)
- You can access COVID-19 assistance in your language by calling the National Coronavirus Helpline on **1800 020 080** and select the option for interpreter services
- You can access the [Centrelink multilingual phone service \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language/products/multilingual-phone-service\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/information-in-your-language/products/multilingual-phone-service) on **131 202**

Where can I find resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

- [Messages in language: Audio, video and printed information with health messages for coronavirus \(COVID-19\) in Aboriginal languages](https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/remote-communities/messages-in-language#/testing) (https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/stay-safe/remote-communities/messages-in-language#/testing) – developed by the Northern Territory Government
- [COVID-19 Readiness Family Plan](https://www.makethechoice.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/0335-COVID-19-Family-Plan_WEB_211201-1.pdf) (https://www.makethechoice.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/0335-COVID-19-Family-Plan_WEB_211201-1.pdf) – developed by the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council
- [Self-isolation and living with others](https://www.ahmrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-10-8_AHMRC_COVID-19_Home-isolation_checklist.pdf) (https://www.ahmrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/2021-10-8_AHMRC_COVID-19_Home-isolation_checklist.pdf) – developed by the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW
- The Northern Land Council (NLC) has produced a series of videos about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Aboriginal languages. You can watch the videos on the [NLC YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/user/NorthernLandCouncil/) (https://www.youtube.com/user/NorthernLandCouncil/)
- tips and videos on [Central Land Council Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/CentralLandCouncil/) (https://www.facebook.com/CentralLandCouncil/)
- material and videos in [Anindilyakwa](https://www.anindilyakwasafe.net/d/) (https://www.anindilyakwasafe.net/d/)
- more messages in [Yolngu Matha](https://ards.com.au/covid-19/) (https://ards.com.au/covid-19/)
- resources in Ngagni, Warlpiri, Yolngu Matha, Western Arrernte, Luritja/Pintupi, Yanyuwa – [Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory Website](http://www.amsant.org.au/covid-19/) (http://www.amsant.org.au/covid-19/)

Further information

- [healthdirect Managing COVID-19 at home \(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/managing-covid-19-at-home-faqs\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/managing-covid-19-at-home-faqs) – provides answers to frequently asked questions.
- [healthdirect COVID-clarity \(https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-clarity\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/covid-clarity) – provides in-language COVID-19 support
- [healthdirect coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Symptom Checker \(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/healthdirect-coronavirus-covid-19-symptom-checker\)](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/healthdirect-coronavirus-covid-19-symptom-checker) – asks you a number of questions about your symptoms and gives general advice on appropriate actions.
- [Centrelink social work services \(https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/social-work-services/how-contact-social-worker\)](https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/social-work-services/how-contact-social-worker) – provides access to social workers over the phone.
- [Local state and territory health departments \(https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments\)](https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments) – provides contact details for support services in your local area.
- [Living with COVID-19 – COVID-19 ready kit \(https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/living-with-covid-19-covid-19-ready-kit\)](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/living-with-covid-19-covid-19-ready-kit) – this checklist can help you make a plan so if you, or someone in your household, tests positive for COVID-19 and needs to isolate you are prepared.

Disclaimer

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