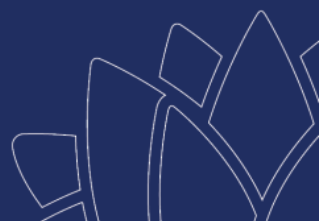# Testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home

It is no longer mandatory to self-isolate if you test positive to COVID-19, but it is strongly recommended you stay home and take steps to protect others.

Most people with COVID-19 can manage safely at home. Monitor your symptoms. If you are concerned about your symptoms, you should call your doctor or the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. If symptoms become severe call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

If you are at higher risk of severe illness and have tested positive, speak to your doctor as soon as possible as you may be eligible for antiviral medicines.

What should I do if I test positive?

You may be infectious for up to 10 days. You are most infectious in the 2 days before your symptoms start and while you have acute symptoms (such as a runny nose, sore throat, fever, cough). Some people with COVID-19 do not develop symptoms at all but are still able to infect others.

To reduce the risk to others NSW Health recommends you**:**

1. **Stay home** until your acute symptoms have gone. If you are at higher risk of severe illness, speak with your doctor as soon as you test positive. You may be eligible for antiviral medicines or other treatments for COVID-19. Antiviral medicines work best when used as soon as symptoms start.

2. **Don't visit people at high risk of severe illness, anyone in hospital or an aged or disability care facility for at least 7 days.**

3. **Wear a mask** when indoors and on public transport, if you must leave your home.

4. **Avoid large gatherings and indoor crowded places,** especially where you will be in contact with groups of people you don't live with.

5. **Talk to your employer about when you should return to the workplace.**

   You should talk to your workplace about working from home, where possible. If you work in a high-risk setting such as health, disability and aged care, it is recommended that you stay away from the workplace for at least 7 days and until you have no symptoms to help protect other staff, patients, residents, and clients. If your employer needs you to return to the workplace before this time, they may ask you to take additional steps to protect others, subject to their work, health and safety assessment.

6. **Tell people that you live with, or spend a lot of time with, that you have COVID-19.**

   People you live with or spend a lot of time indoors with are at greatest risk of catching COVID-19 from you. You should tell them you have tested positive and try to separate from them as much as possible. They should test regularly and monitor for symptoms. If they get sick, they should get tested and stay home. They should follow the Information for people exposed to COVID-19 fact sheet.

7. **Register your positive rapid antigen test result with Service NSW.**

   If you or someone in your family can't register online, please call Service NSW on 13 77 88. Registering your result helps you access medical support from NSW Health, including antiviral medicines if you are eligible, and also assists NSW Health respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. **This keeps you, your loved ones and the community safe.** If you tested positive on a PCR test, you do not need to register your result.

How should I manage my symptoms?

When you register your positive rapid antigen test (RAT) or test positive on a PCR test you will be asked to answer some questions that help NSW Health determine if you are at higher risk of severe illness. Please respond to these questions as soon as you can as you may be eligible for antiviral medicines. Antiviral medicines work best when taken as soon as possible, usually within 5 days from when your symptoms start.

Most people with COVID-19 have a mild illness and recover in a few days, with some people having no symptoms at all. Most symptoms can be managed with:

- Bed rest
- Regular paracetamol and ibuprofen to relieve pain and fevers
- Keeping hydrated with regular sips of water.

Continue to take any medications you have been prescribed as usual. If you are unsure about continuing to take your current medication or treatment, or have any concerns about your health, call your doctor.

Monitor your symptoms

Ask yourself these questions three times every day (morning, afternoon, and night):

Question	Answer no	Answer yes
Am I having trouble eating and drinking?	Continue to eat and drink normally.	Take frequent sips of water or an electrolyte replacement drink. **If you don't improve, call your doctor or Healthdirect 1800 022 222**
Am I passing a lot less urine than normal?	Continue to stay hydrated.	Drink more water or an electrolyte replacement drink. **If you don't improve, call your doctor or Healtdirect 1800 022 222**
Do I feel a little dizzy or lightheaded when walking around the room?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	Drink more water or an electrolyte replacement drink. **If you don't improve, call your doctor or Healthdirect 1800 022 222**
Do I feel severely dizzy, drowsy or confused?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	**Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19**
Am I having trouble breathing or feel chest pressure or pain lasting more than 10 minutes?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	**Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19**
Do I feel like I might faint when I stand?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	**Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19**

If you have questions during your illness that are not urgent, call the National Coronavirus Helpline, a 24-hour service, on 1800 020 080.

Who is at higher risk of severe illness?

Some people are at higher risk of severe illness (more likely to get very sick, and may be at higher risk of needing hospital care), including:

- All people aged 70 years and older
- People aged 50 years with additional risk factors, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease (including moderate or severe asthma requiring inhaled steroids), neurological disease, severe chronic liver or kidney disease, active cancer or those who are not up to date with recommended vaccination
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30 years and over with additional risk factors listed above
- People who are moderately to severely immunocompromised of any age
- People with significant or complex disability

- Pregnant women (see [What if I am pregnant and have COVID-19?](#))
- Children with complex chronic conditions

If you live in a remote area and have reduced access to healthcare or are a resident in an aged care or disability care facility, discuss your risk with your doctor as you may also be eligible for antiviral treatment or additional supportive care.

If you are at higher risk of severe illness, you may be eligible for antiviral medicines or other treatments for COVID-19. These work best when taken as soon as possible, usually within 5 days from when your symptoms start. Read more information on [antiviral medicines](#) including how to access them if you are eligible.

If you are not able to get in touch with your doctor, contact the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080 who are able to check if you are eligible for antivirals.

What if I am pregnant and have COVID-19?

Most pregnant women will be able to safely stay at home while they have COVID-19. During this time, it is important to:

- Drink plenty of fluids, like you would with a regular cold or flu
- Take paracetamol if you feel unwell, to help with symptoms. Ibuprofen is <u>not</u> recommended to take while you are pregnant
- Remain hydrated and mobilise regularly to reduce your risk of developing blood clots. If you have a history of blood clots or are obese, please contact your doctor or maternity care provider to discuss your management options
- Keep a close eye on your baby's movements. Call your maternity care provider immediately **if your baby's movements change** or if you experience:
  - vaginal bleeding
  - abdominal pain
  - constant clear watery vaginal discharge
  - contractions any time before 37 weeks
  - persistent fever
  - headaches
  - sudden swelling of your face and hands
  - you are in labour
  - have any serious concerns about your pregnancy
- Call Triple Zero (000) if you have difficulty breathing, develop chest pressure or pain, have severe headaches or dizziness. Tell ambulance staff that you have COVID-19 and are pregnant
- Continue your regular antenatal care after recovering from COVID-19.

How do I manage a baby or child with COVID-19?

Most children who test positive for COVID-19 can be safely cared for at home by their usual household carers, even if they are not vaccinated. When caring for your child with COVID-19 at home:

- Dress your child in appropriate clothing, so that they are comfortable – not sweating or shivering
- Give your child plenty of fluids to drink. They may not feel like drinking much so will need your help and encouragement
- Check if your baby seems to want more frequent breast or formula feeds. Breastfeeding is safe to continue if you and/or your baby has COVID-19
- Encourage them to rest and not overdo it
- Use paracetamol or ibuprofen, only if you think your child is in pain or appears uncomfortable with a fever. Follow the instructions on the label. Only give the recommended dose in a 24-hour period otherwise this may be harmful for children.

Monitor your child's symptoms. Call your doctor or the **Healthdirect on 1800 022 222** if you notice:

- persistent fever (>39°C) which is not responding to treatment
- mild breathlessness
- drinking less than half of what they would normally drink

- urine output less than half of usual volume, and urine dark in colour
- moderate vomiting or diarrhoea
- unable to stand or walk.

If you are concerned your child is seriously unwell, has difficulty breathing, is severely dehydrated or fainting, call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the operator your child has COVID-19.

How can I protect other people I live with?

If you live with other people, it is strongly recommended you stay separated from them until your acute symptoms (such as runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever) have gone. There are simple steps you can take to help prevent the virus spreading through your household.

Physically distance

This means:

- staying and sleeping in a separate room
- using a separate bathroom if available
- not being in the same room as another person.

Practise good hygiene

- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wear a mask in shared areas or when caring for other members of your household
- Take extra care to remain separate from any members of your household who are at higher risk of severe illness, including people who are elderly, immunocompromised or have medical conditions such as heart, lung or kidney problems.

How do I protect other people if I live in a multi unit dwelling (eg. apartment building or hotel)?

If you live in an apartment building or you are staying in a hotel while unwell, it is recommended that you:

- Remain inside your own unit/room as much as possible. Avoid shared laundry facilities or any other common areas such as a gym, pool or shared outdoor area
- Wear a mask any time you leave the apartment/room
- Open windows if possible/safe to maximise fresh air and natural ventilation
- Ask for any deliveries, including food, to be left outside your door. It is advised not to open the door until the delivery person has left and the corridor is empty to protect the delivery person.

What if I have shared care arrangements?

- Moving between households, even for shared caring arrangements, is not recommended while you are sick. You should only move to another household after your acute symptoms have gone.

How soon should I get vaccinated after having COVID-19?

You should follow the latest guidance from Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) to determine when you should receive your next vaccination.

Find a COVID-19 vaccination appointment near you using the COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder.

For further information, read:

- frequently asked questions on COVID-19 vaccines
- booster vaccine information.

When do I need to test again for COVID-19?

After you have had COVID-19, you have a low risk of getting it again for 4 weeks after your acute symptoms have gone.

If you have any new symptoms in the 4 weeks since you have recovered, stay home until they have gone. If you are at a higher risk of severe illness and have symptoms, speak to your doctor about further testing.

If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 more than 4 weeks after your acute symptoms have gone, it is recommended you follow the advice in the Information for people exposed to COVID-19 and What COVID-19 test should I do? fact sheets.

What support is available if I have COVID-19?

COVID-19 support

- If symptoms become severe call Triple Zero (000) immediately.
- If you have health questions during your illness that are not urgent, call the National Coronavirus Helpline, a 24-hour service, on 1800 020 080.
- If you need practical assistance when staying at home, call the NSW Health COVID-19 Support Line on 1800 943 553
- You may be eligible for the **High-Risk Settings Pandemic Payment**, if you work in a high-risk setting such as health, aged or disability care and can't earn an income because you've tested positive to COVID-19.

Mental health support

- NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511
- Beyond Blue helpline – 1800 512 348
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800
- Service NSW mental wellbeing resources
- NSW Health has partnered with Sonder to provide a free personal wellbeing service, available to help support you. The app provides access to confidential 24/7 multilingual chat and phone access to a range of mental health and wellbeing support services. Download the app at https://be.sonder.io/wellbeing-nsw-health and enter the code HERE2HELP.

Domestic violence support

- National sexual assault and domestic violence helpline on 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

Help in your language

- If you need an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National on 131 450, This service is free and confidential.