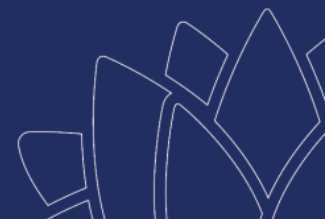


Frequently asked questions for parents and carers of people who need to be isolated due to COVID-19



- This factsheet is for parents or carers of someone who needs to isolate due to COVID-19. This could be someone who is a confirmed case, close contact, or a casual contact or someone with COVID-19 symptoms awaiting test results.
- If someone is required to isolate as they are a confirmed case or casual contact, this is enforceable under the [Public Health Order](#).

Does the person I care for need to self-isolate?

If the person you care for has COVID-19 symptoms, has been tested for COVID-19 or has been identified as a confirmed, close or casual contact, they will need to self-isolate.

If you are caring for someone who needs to self-isolate, you will need to isolate with them.

If you have been identified as a confirmed COVID-19 case or contact, and you need to continue caring for someone that you cannot self-isolate from, they will need to follow the same isolation requirements as you.

Do others in the household need to self-isolate?

The need for others in your household to self-isolate along with you will depend on if the person you care for is symptomatic or are a case or contact.

- If they have been notified as a [confirmed case](#)¹, it is likely all members of the household will need to self-isolate as they will have had close contact with the person who is infectious. You will be contacted by an authorised contact tracer who will tell you how long you need to isolate.
- If they are notified as a [close contact](#)², anyone providing care for that person will need to isolate with them until they receive a negative test result. If you are able to isolate yourselves from others in the home, others will not need to self-isolate with you.
- If the person you care for has been notified as a [casual contact](#)³ or they have [COVID-19 symptoms](#)⁴, anyone providing care for that person will need to isolate with them until they receive a negative test result. If you are able to isolate yourselves from others in the home, others will not need to self-isolate with you.

How should we isolate?

- Do not leave your home, hotel or other accommodation, unless for urgent medical care or in an emergency (including to avoid injury or escape risk of harm from domestic violence). If you leave home for these reasons you must wear a face mask, stay 1.5m away from anyone else, and travel directly to and from the location back to your home, accommodation or alternative accommodation in the case of an emergency.
- Do not go to work, school, childcare or public areas and do not use public transport or ride share
- Do not have visitors

¹ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-confirmed.aspx>

² <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-contacts.aspx>

³ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/covid-19-casual-contact.aspx>

⁴ <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/advice-for-suspected.aspx>

- You can go into your private garden, balcony or courtyard if you have one
- Practice good hygiene:
 - Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Wash your hands:
 - before entering an area where there are other people
 - before touching things used by other people
 - after using the bathroom
 - after coughing or sneezing
 - before putting on, and after removing, gloves and masks.
 - Clean all surfaces you touch often (counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables) at least once a day wearing disposable gloves. After cleaning apply a household disinfectant or diluted bleach solution.
- Ask your family or friends to pick up groceries and medicines for you or order online or by telephone. If you still need help with obtaining food and essential supplies, call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.

How should we self-isolate from others in the home?

Your Public Health Unit can discuss your living arrangements and whether you can effectively self-isolate from other people in your household. They will also check if there is anyone in your household who is at greater risk of illness such as someone who is elderly or immunosuppressed. If you live with people who work in a high-risk setting, refer to the advice for households of people working in a high-risk setting.

If you can't effectively self-isolate, alternative accommodation for you or your household will be arranged.

If you can effectively self-isolate from the people you live with, at all times you will need to:

- remain separated
- stay and sleep in a different room
- use a separate bathroom, if available (otherwise clean it after every use)
- wear a mask when you are in the same room as another person (even if the other person is also in isolation)
- does not share household items including dishes, cups, towels, bedding, or other items. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water or use a dishwasher/washing machine
- avoid shared areas and wear a mask when moving through these areas (children under 12 years of age do not need to wear a mask).

What if we cannot isolate from others in the household?

It is important to separate a person who tested positive to COVID-19 (infectious person) from others in the household, even if they are also isolating as close contacts. However, it may not be possible to separate them from their primary care giver or others in the household due to their age or other reasons. In this case, anyone who has ongoing contact with the infectious person must extend their own isolation period to 14 days after they last had contact with the infectious person.

If you are having trouble isolating the person who tested positive to COVID-19, please speak to your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 for assistance. If appropriate, the Public Health Unit can arrange alternative accommodation.

If anyone is not able to isolate from close contact, these household members will need to isolate at home until the close contact is allowed to leave isolation. Please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055 to discuss your circumstances.

Does my child need to wear a mask?

Not all age groups can use masks effectively and it may not be safe for all children. It is not necessary for children under 12 years of age to wear a mask. Parents may assist children in this age group with hand hygiene.

Teenagers over 12 years of age who are able to wear masks should do so when they are with others. For further advice, please see the latest advice on [face masks](#)⁵.

Other people in the household should wear a mask whenever they are in contact with your child, whether your child is wearing a mask or not. If your child is unable to self-isolate, please request advice from your local public health unit on 1300 066 055.

What if my child does not live in the same household as their parents or siblings?

If your child travels between households, you should apply COVID-19 isolation guidelines across both households as if they were one.

If your child is in isolation as a confirmed case or contact of COVID-19, your child may move from one household to another, as per your usual arrangements, as long as you follow the appropriate isolation guidelines.

When travelling between households, your child must not travel by public transport or ride-share.

If your child is a confirmed COVID-19 case or symptomatic contact, any residents of the different households must isolate at home until 14 days after they last had contact with your child (while they were infectious).

If a parent or carer has been identified as a confirmed COVID-19 case or contact, the isolation requirements for your child will also apply to anyone else who is caring for them. For example, if you are a casual contact who has been tested for COVID-19, and your child is travelling to the household of another parent or carer per your usual arrangements, members of that other household must also isolate with your child until you receive a negative result.

If you are unsure what the isolation requirements mean for your family, please call your local Public Health Unit on 1300 066 055.

What if the person I care for develops COVID-19 symptoms?

If the person you care for develops symptoms at any point during self-isolation, get them tested immediately. You must not travel by public transport or ride-share. Wear face masks and tell staff immediately that they are a close contact of a person with COVID-19.

Symptoms you should watch carefully for are:

- fever (37.5°C or higher) or history of fever (night sweats, chills)
- cough
- runny nose
- shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- sore throat
- loss of smell
- loss of taste

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include an acute blocked nose (congestion), fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, headache, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, loss of appetite, unexplained chest pain and conjunctivitis.

What do I do if the person I care for needs medical attention?

If the person you care for becomes severely unwell and it is a medical emergency, you should phone Triple Zero (000). Tell the ambulance staff that you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

⁵ <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/face-masks>

If non-emergency medical attention is required, call ahead to your health care provider to let them know that the person you care for has been identified as a COVID-19 case or contact to make appropriate arrangements.

Someone has tested positive for COVID-19 at my child's school/childcare and my child has not been identified as a close contact

If there is a case of COVID-19 at your child's school or childcare on a day that they attended, either the Public Health Unit or the school or childcare will provide advice about what you need to do.

Monitor your child for symptoms and if symptoms develop get them tested immediately. You must not travel by public transport or ride-share. Wear face masks and tell staff immediately that a person at their school has tested positive for COVID-19.

If your child is tested for COVID-19, they should isolate at home and not attend school or childcare until they receive a negative test result.

Examples of different scenarios

Scenario 1 - family not able to isolate within the household

Meg has three children: a daughter aged 2 years old who goes to childcare and two sons aged 6 and 8 years who go to primary school. The childcare centre has told Meg that there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the childcare centre. The Public Health Unit rang Meg to let her know that her 2 year old daughter is considered to be a close contact and must get tested and self-isolate for 14 days.

Meg took her daughter immediately to get tested at the local clinic, and told the staff that her daughter had been identified as a close contact.

They then returned home to isolate for the 14 day isolation period. Because her children are so young, Meg decided that she would allow her daughter and sons to continue having contact at home. This meant that Meg and her sons also had to stay home and not go to school during her daughter's 14 day isolation period.

On day 12 of the isolation period, Meg took her daughter to have another test and received a negative result. After day 14, the self-isolation period ended and Meg's daughter and sons returned to childcare and school. Meg and her sons did not need to be tested as they had remained well and Meg's daughter had tested negative.

Scenario 2 - family able to isolate within the household

Chau and Thuan have two children: a son aged 13 years old and a daughter (Amy) aged 17 years old. Both attend the same high school. A friend of their daughter at school was diagnosed with COVID-19 and their daughter is considered a close contact and must get tested and self-isolate for 14 days. Their son did not have contact with the daughter's friend who is the case.

Chau went immediately with Amy to the local testing clinic to get a COVID-19 test. Amy told the clinic staff that Amy had been identified as a close contact.

After speaking to the Public Health Unit, Chau and Thuan decided that as their children are older and the house is large enough, they would isolate their daughter Amy from the rest of the family for the 14-day isolation period in their home. Chau and Thuan and their son waited at home until Amy returned a negative test result. Then they returned to school and work.

On day 12 of her isolation period, Amy went with her dad to get another COVID-19 test. Later she received a negative test result. After day 14, Amy's self-isolation period ended and she returned to school.

Scenario 3 - child lives in two different households

Amy has been notified that she is a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, but she does not have any symptoms. She needs to get tested and isolate for 14 days since she was exposed to the confirmed case. As per their parenting arrangements, her sons Harry and Jack are due to spend the next week with their father Tom, who lives with his partner Jessica. Amy informs Tom of her situation, and he collects the boys by car to spend the week with him. He isolates with the boys and they remain separated from Jessica, using different areas of the house where possible, and disinfecting shared areas like the kitchen after use. Jessica is still able

to go to work and move about freely outside. When Amy has finished her period of self-isolation, Tom and the boys are able to end their isolation too.

Where can I find more information or support?

More information for parents and carers is available from:

- Carers Australia - [COVID-19 advice for carers](#)
- Beyond Blue – [Information on supporting others during the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- Raising Children Network - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and children in Australia](#)
- Department of Education - [Information about COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) and NSW schools, universities and childcare centres](#)

Several services are available if you need mental wellbeing support or more information:

- [Lifeline Australia](#) : 13 11 14
- [Beyond Blue Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service](#): 1800 512 348
- [Kids Helpline](#) : 1800 551800
- NSW Mental Health Line: 1800 011 511
- Call the National Coronavirus Health Information line: 1800 020 080