

Protecting yourself from coronavirus

Important information about self-isolation for people who are not sick



This interim guidance is based on what is currently known about coronavirus (COVID-19). The Tasmanian Government will update interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available. This interim guidance is to help everyone plan for community transmission of coronavirus in Tasmania. There is **much to learn about its transmissibility, severity, and other features of the disease**. We want to help everyone prepare their response to this public health threat.

If you've been told to self-isolate because you might have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19, you must do so.

The direction to self-isolate will be because in the past 14 days you have either:

- had close contact with someone known to have COVID-19
- returned from overseas where the virus may be more common.

If you have been exposed to the virus, it could take up to 14 days for you to start feeling sick, and you could spread the virus to others 24 hours before you start feeling sick.

Isolating yourself is essential to slow the spread of illness in and protect others.

What do I need to do?

If you've been told to self isolate, you must stay at your home or accommodation (unless you need medical care). You cannot attend public places, including:

- work
- supermarkets and chemists
- school, childcare, university
- places of worship.

Only people who usually live with you should be in your home. Don't have visitors, even if they are in home isolation as well. Let your family, friends and neighbours know you are in home isolation and tell them not to visit. Consider putting a note on your door to let people know.

If you are in a hotel, avoid contact with other guests and staff.

How long do I need to be in isolation?

You need to be in home isolation for 14 days from returning to Australia or being in contact with someone known to have COVID-19.

If you don't develop any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in that time, you can stop your home isolation and return to your normal daily activities including going to work or school. You don't need a clearance certificate to return to work or school.

Getting there

When travelling to your home or accommodation to start your isolation period, use private transport if you can, to protect others, and go straight there.

If you need to use public transport (buses, taxis, ride-hail services), you must:

- Wear a surgical facemask, if you can.
- Wash your hands before boarding and after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.
- Try to keep away from elderly people.
- Keep your hands to yourself as much as possible; minimise the things you touch.
- Avoid direct contact with other passengers and drivers.
- Cough / sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your elbow; and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

What about the people I live with?

Its particularly important to protect people who are at higher risk of severe illness. That's older people (people over the age of 60 years) and people with serious underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, renal failure, cancer, diabetes and renal failure.

If you live with someone at risk of severe illness, its best if they live elsewhere while you are in isolation. If that's not feasible, keep as much distance as possible between yourself and them.

If you share your home / accommodation with others:

- Try to stay away from shared spaces, like the kitchen and lounge room.
- Wash and dry your hands often and well, with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover all coughs and sneezes. If you don't have a tissue handy, use the inside of your elbow. Put used tissues in the rubbish straight away and wash your hands well.
- Sleep in a separate bed and use a separate bathroom, if you can.
- Keep personal items like towels, face washers and toothbrushes separate.
- Do not share food or drinks.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces (like door handles, sink taps and benches) in shared areas at least daily, using normal household detergent or disinfectant.
- Wear a facemask if you need to be around other people at home.

People living with you don't need to be stay isolated unless they too have been told they need to be self-isolate because:

- they have COVID-19
- have recently travelled overseas or
- recently been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

How can I get food and do essential tasks outside the home?

Ask a family member, friend, neighbour or colleague to help with essential tasks outside your home, including getting food and other supplies you need. Tell them to leave supplies on your doorstep and not to come into the house.

Can I go outside?

If you live in a private house, you can go outside into your garden, balcony or courtyard.

If you live in an apartment or unit, you can go onto your balcony. You can go to the shared garden if you wear a facemask to protect others and move quickly through common areas.

Monitor your health

Call your GP, the Public Health Hotline (1800 671 738) or the National Coronavirus Health Information Line (1800 020 080) if you start to get sick with a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath. Tell them you've been in self-isolation because of COVID-19.

If you have trouble breathing or become very sick, call 000 for an ambulance straight away. Tell them you've been in self-isolation because of COVID-19.

Look after yourself and mind your mind

Being confined to home can cause boredom and stress. Look after yourself and others by:

- Talking with family and friends
- Reflecting on how you have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassuring yourself that you will cope with this situation too. Remember that self-isolation won't last for long.
- Exercising regularly. Consider exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment. Physical activity is a great way to relieve stress and boredom and stay healthy.
- Keeping in touch with family members and friends by telephone, email or social media.
- Keeping up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- Working from home, if possible.

If you are worried or upset, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.



I'm caring for a child in home isolation

The Tasmanian Department of Education has advice on how to talk to your child about COVID-19. Find it at www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus under 'Resources for schools and families'.

Ask your child's teachers to supply assignments, work sheets and homework by post or email, and if your child can join classes online.

Treating self-isolation as an opportunity to do some of those things you never usually have time for, such as board games, craft, drawing and reading.

Where can I get more information?

More general information is available online at:

- Tasmanian Department of Health website – www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus
- Australian Government website – www.health.gov.au and follow the link from the homepage

You can also call the following numbers if you need help or more information:

- Tasmanian Public Health Hotline, 1800 671 738
- National Coronavirus Health Information Line, 1800 020 080.