

COVID-19 Fact Sheet

Positive test result

Patient Information Pack

This fact sheet has information for people who have received a positive test result for coronavirus (COVID-19).

Please read this information carefully. It contains important information about staying well, protecting others, legal requirements and additional support.

If your coronavirus test result is positive, you will receive several phone calls from different people working together to support you. These calls will include:

- > notification of your result
- > information about people you have had recent contact with
- > an assessment by a doctor of your suitability to isolate in the community; and
- > regular physical and mental wellbeing checks.

If you are assessed as being safe to isolate at home, you will receive daily contact from a health professional to make sure you are ok.

An individual plan will be made with you to discuss what happens if you become more unwell or require additional support to manage your isolation at home. This might include, for example, support to access essential medications in order to remain at home safely.

When to call an ambulance

If you (or someone you are with):

- > has difficulty when breathing, or is turning blue
- > has chest pain or chest tightness
- > is unconscious, or has a seizure (fit)
- > has severe bleeding, or bleeding that you can't stop by applying pressure
- > suddenly can't move or speak, or has sudden facial drooping
- > has skin that feels unusually cold and sweaty, has patchy skin discolouration, or excessively pale skin
- > has severe burns

Call Triple Zero (000) straight away

- > When you call the ambulance service, tell them:
 - o that you need an ambulance, and why
 - o that you or the person you're with has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are awaiting test results
 - o your exact address, including any landmarks that will help them to find you more easily.
- > If you're using a mobile phone and Triple Zero (000) isn't answering, try calling 112.
- > Tell the paramedics when they arrive that you, or the person you're with, has tested positive for COVID-19 or are awaiting results.

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Home isolation information

Who should be isolated at home?

Home isolation for people who are suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 is appropriate in the following circumstances, if:

- > you are well enough to remain at home;
- > there is a separate bedroom where you are not sharing an immediate space with others;
- > you have access to food and other necessities;
- > you do not live with household members who may be at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infection (e.g. people over the age of 60, pregnant women, people who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions).

Most people who are clinically well will be able to safely isolate in their own home, with additional support provided if necessary. In some cases, a health professional may recommend that you isolate in a hotel room instead, or that a vulnerable person who lives with you should go to a hotel. The health professional can help you to arrange this.

When travelling to your home or hotel to start isolation, you must wear a surgical mask. Use private transport, such as a car, to minimise exposure to others. If you do not have access to a private car to travel home or to your hotel for your isolation period, support is available from the COVID-19 Relief Call Centre by calling 1300 705 336.

What does home isolation mean?

During isolation you **must stay at home** (or your hotel room).

- > **You must stay at a suitable place** (as outlined in the section below: *What about other people in my home?*) **and not leave** unless to seek urgent medical care.
- > **You must not go to public places** – this includes work, school, childcare, university, shopping centres, public parks, social or religious gatherings.
- > **You must not go shopping or to restaurants** – shop online or have family or friends deliver what you need to your door.
- > **You must not have visitors at your home.** Only people who usually live with you should be in the home – they must not sleep or be in the same room as you.
- > If you must leave home to seek urgent medical care, wear a surgical mask.

If you live with others, you must stay in your own dedicated room with the door closed. If you do not isolate yourself correctly, the people living with you are more likely to get COVID-19. As a result, they may become unwell, or may need to extend their isolation period.

Do I need to wear a mask inside my home?

The people who live with you should not stay or sleep in the same room as you, and you should wear a mask if they need to enter your room.

You should wear a mask if you have to go into a shared space, but should avoid being in the same room as anyone else. You do not need to wear a mask when you are isolating in your room.

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What about other people in my home?

Only household members who are essential for supporting you should stay in the home. Older people (over 60) and those with compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions should stay away.

If you are sharing the home with others, you should stay in a different room from them.

Because we need to minimise the number of people you are in contact with, you may need to make arrangements for yourself or other household members to stay somewhere else.

If this is not possible, please contact the COVID-19 Relief Call Centre on 1300 705 336 for information and assistance with accommodation support for people unable to appropriately self-quarantine at home. You can also email housingrelief@sa.gov.au.

- > **Avoid contact** with other people living in the same home as you. Do not be in the same room as them.
- > **Sleep in your own room** and use a dedicated bathroom and toilet (if available).
- > Keep your **door closed**. You can open your window for fresh air.
- > **Avoid sharing towels**, toiletries or other household items with others in your house.
- > **Wash clothes and bed linen**, using a hot wash cycle.
- > Do not use the kitchen when other people are in the room. **Eat your meal in your room.**
- > Make sure you have **separate items like plates and cutlery**. Wash dishes using the dishwasher or wash in hot soapy water.
- > **Regularly clean** frequently touched items with a detergent and disinfectant. Use disposable paper towel or disposable wipes or cloths.

If you are concerned about the wellbeing of another person who lives in your home, please discuss this with your health professional during your daily phone call.

Do carers or household members need to be isolated as well?

If you test positive for COVID-19, the people you live with and other close contacts will need to be isolated at home. They will be contacted by the Communicable Disease Control Branch and told how long they need to be isolated.

If someone who has been in contact with you does not require isolation but become unwell, they should call their GP or nearest hospital for assessment and advice about what to do next. **In an emergency, call triple zero (000) immediately and alert ambulance staff to their travel/contact history.**

In most cases, all close contacts will be required to isolate for 14 days after their last contact with someone who may be infectious. If strict isolation has not occurred, this may be extended further.

Can I go outside?

If you live in a private house, you can go into your garden or courtyard by yourself. While you are in isolation in your room, keep your door closed. You can open your window for fresh air.

If you live in an apartment, hotel or shared lodgings, you must avoid common areas such as courtyards. Do not go to public parks or gardens. You cannot take your dog or other pets for walks outside your property.

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If you are a primary producer and have been ordered to self-isolate, you must remain within the boundaries of your property and avoid contact with other people. Essential travel within and between land parcels is acceptable, provided you avoid contact with any staff/contractors and visitors (e.g. stay in your vehicle with windows closed to allow contractors or deliveries to enter the property via a gate).

Cleaning

Regularly clean objects and surfaces that are frequently touched, such as door handles, light switches, and kitchen and bathroom areas. Clean with household detergent (liquid or wipes) and disinfectants where possible (e.g. sodium hypochlorite / bleach based products).

Rubbish and waste

Dispose used personal items such as tissues, disposable masks, gloves, and other contaminated items in a rubbish bin lined with a plastic bag inside your room. Tie-off/close the plastic bag and dispose of the bag into the general household waste bin (not recycling). After handling and disposal of waste, wash hands thoroughly.

Shopping

Do not go shopping. Arrange for food and essential items to be dropped off at your door by family or friends, or use online shopping services offered by many supermarkets.

You can order food from restaurants or services that can provide home delivery. Most major supermarkets offer a delivery service for people in isolation. Do not interact face-to-face with people delivering your items or food. Ask them to leave items at your door.

Accessing medicines

If you need [medicines](#) (including prescription medicines), ask a family member or friend (who is not in isolation) to deliver them to your home and leave at your door. Some pharmacies offer a home delivery service. Ask for deliveries to be left at your door.

Find out more in the Consumer factsheet on [Emergency supply of essential medicines and the Coronavirus](#) on the SA Health website.

Cleaning your home

The virus that causes COVID-19 can live in your home on surfaces like door handles for several days. Following these recommendations will help to keep you and anyone living with you safe.

To minimise the spread of any germs, you should regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched, such as door handles, light switches, kitchen and bathroom areas. Clean with household detergent (liquid or wipes) and disinfectant where possible (e.g. sodium hypochlorite / bleach based products).

Dishes and cutlery

If you have COVID-19, you should have your own dishes and cutlery (not shared with anyone else living in your home).

Once you've finished eating, these should be washed in a dishwasher or with hot soapy water.

If someone else lives at home with you and is helping, you should leave the dishes outside your bedroom door. They can pick them up (wearing rubber gloves if they are available), wash them, and then store them separately from everyone else's dishes and cutlery.

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Washing linen and clothes

Bedsheets and other linen, towels, tea towels, clothes and cleaning cloths should all be kept separately from anyone else in your home and their linen.

Keep any dirty linen separate from everyone else's dirty linen/clothes. Wash them in a separate load in your washing machine, using hot water and laundry detergent.

You can hang them out to dry on the washing line or use a clothes dryer.

If someone is helping you to wash these, they should use gloves to collect dirty linen, and hold them away from their clothing or wear an apron (that they can wash with the dirty linen). Try not to shake the dirty laundry or linen. After handling any used linen from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, you should carefully wash your hands using soap and water.

Once linen is clean and dry, they should be stored in the bedroom where the person is staying during their self-isolation.

Garbage / rubbish

Keep a bin lined with a plastic bag in the person's room to dispose of all used personal care items such as tissues, disposable masks, gloves, and other items that might have body fluids on them. When the bin in your room is 3/4 full, tie closed the plastic bag to prevent spillage of the contents and then place it outside the door.

Avoid touching the inside of the bag and dispose of the bag straight away in the general household waste bin.

This waste should NOT go into the recycling bin. Anyone who touches the rubbish while taking it out to the bin should thoroughly wash their hands using soap and water.

Use disposable gloves if available – you can use these to handle rubbish, but still need to wash your hands when you take them off. Avoid touching anything else with the gloves until they've been removed and put into the rubbish. Wash your hands. If you don't have gloves, wash your hands immediately after handling the rubbish,

What cleaning products or disinfectants should I use?

You can clean with household detergent (liquid or wipes) and a disinfectant (like bleach based products). Lots of everyday cleaners are effective against coronavirus. Check the packaging to make sure it mentions it is effective against viruses. Make sure you follow any safety instructions on the packaging.

It's a good idea to wipe down your room and bathroom at least once a day, making sure you wipe down things that get touched often like light switches, tables, benches and door handles.

Anything you have touched should be carefully wiped down using an appropriate cleaning product like bleach.

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Information for contacts of confirmed cases

If someone has been in close contact with you and is at risk of infection, they will receive a phone call from a public health official to advise them to isolate, and what precautions they should take. You can share this information with anyone who has been in contact with you and is worried or has questions. They can also call the SA COVID-19 Information Line on 1800 253 787.

How is the infection spread?

COVID-19 is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- > direct close contact with a person while they are infectious or in the 24 hours before their symptoms appeared (usually face to face contact for at least 15 minutes; or being in the same closed space for at least 2 hours)
- > close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or
- > touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated with virus-laden droplets from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are transmitted by people when they have symptoms. These can include fever, chills, cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, or loss of taste or smell.

Close contacts of a person with a confirmed infection (such as people staying in the same house or sharing a closed space for a prolonged length of time) are most at risk of infection.

How long is a person infectious for?

The length of time that a person can spread the infection to others is not yet known.

It is possible a person can spread the infection from before the time they first develop symptoms until shortly after symptoms stop. However, there have been some cases where infection has been passed on by a person not showing any symptoms, or very mild symptoms.

Who is most at risk of a serious illness?

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may become very ill, very quickly. From previous experience with other coronaviruses, the people at most risk of serious infection are:

- > people with compromised immune systems (e.g. because of cancer)
- > older people
- > Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness
- > people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions
- > people in group residential settings (e.g. aged care or disability care).

What do I do if I develop symptoms?

If you develop symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness, shortness of breath, or loss of taste and/or smell) within 14 days of last contact with a confirmed case, isolate yourself and arrange to speak to your doctor or local hospital for urgent assessment.

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You should telephone the health clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them your travel history or that you may have been in contact with a potential case of COVID-19. You must remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until the Communicable Disease Control Branch inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

How is the infection treated?

Treatment includes supportive therapies, like providing someone with extra oxygen. There is no specific anti-viral treatment for COVID-19. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections. Most of the symptoms can be treated with supportive medical care.

How can we help prevent the spread of the infection?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- > Wash your hands often with soap and water, or using hand sanitiser. It's a good idea to do this before and after preparing food and eating, after going to the toilet, or after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- > Cover your cough and sneeze with your elbow or a tissue, and throw your used tissues straight into the bin
- > Avoid contact with others - this means not touching, kissing, hugging, or other intimate contact (physical distance by staying more than 1.5 metres from people).

Should I wear a face mask?

You do not need to wear a mask if you are healthy. While the use of masks can help to prevent transmission of disease from infected people to others, masks are not currently recommended for use by healthy members of the public for the prevention of infections like COVID-19, unless you are directly caring for someone with COVID-19.

Where can I get support?

SA COVID Relief Centre

If you need additional emergency supplies, for example, if you cannot buy food or other essential items due to financial hardship, or do not have a safe place to stay during your isolation, additional support is available.

You can access this by calling the SA COVID Relief Centre on 1300 705 336.

Telecross REDi COVID-19

Australian Red Cross has partnered with the Government of South Australia to provide phone-based support to people in self-isolation as a result of COVID-19.

Specially trained Red Cross staff and volunteers conduct the calls, supporting the wellbeing of community members, as well as reiterating up-to-date government public health advice. Further steps will be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the person as appropriate.

Community members impacted can access the service by:

- > Phone: 1800 188 071
- > Online: register.redcross.org.au

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Release from isolation

This fact sheet is for everyone who has had a positive test for COVID-19. It provides information about the process to release you from isolation. This is a different process than for people who are in self-quarantine for travel or close contact.

When will I be released from home isolation?

You must continue to self-isolate until you are officially released. Leaving self-isolation before this is against the law, and penalties may apply.

The medical guidelines to make sure that you are at low risk of infecting someone else with COVID-19 are regularly being updated as our understanding of COVID-19 improves. The COVID-19 GP Assessment Team doctor who assesses you will be aware of the latest updates. They will make the final decision whether you need to remain in self-isolation or can be released. Currently, this includes being symptom-free for 72 hours, and it must have been at least ten days since you first had symptoms. If you were admitted to hospital for COVID-19, or you work in health or aged care, extra requirements may apply.

What about other members of my household?

If you have been living with others during your isolation period, they should follow all advice provided by SA Health about their personal release date from isolation. They must continue to follow this direction about their personal isolation, even once you are released.

What does it mean when I am released from isolation?

This means you will no longer be under a legal requirement to remain self-isolated at home. You **MUST** still follow all current federal and state government directions, including physical distancing (keeping 1.5 metres from others), regular handwashing, and coughing and sneezing into your elbow or a clean tissue. **You should also book an appointment to see your regular GP seven days after you are released.**

What if I still need mental health support?

It is possible to experience stress and anxiety about having been diagnosed with COVID-19, even once you are released from isolation. A mental health wellbeing check will be offered to you after you are released, along with further support if you need it. The resources listed above under Mental Health and Wellbeing may also be of use during this time.

What do I do if symptoms re-appear?

If any of your symptoms re-appear, you **MUST** return to strict self-isolation immediately and call your GP for further instructions.

When can I return to work?

The doctor assessing you will advise you if it is safe for you to return to work. If you require a clearance certificate to return to work, please ask them during this assessment. If you are returning to work in health or aged care, additional clearance requirements may apply.

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Mental health and wellbeing

It's normal to feel stress or worry when being tested for COVID-19, and when in isolation or quarantine. Family and friends can also experience similar mental health impacts. A positive test result can also create additional concerns.

Potential mental health impacts on people directly affected:

- > increased anxiety for self and others (this can be expressed as a fear for one's own health, and a fear of infecting others)
- > psychological distress
- > perceived stigmatisation
- > social isolation
- > interruption to employment or study
- > impact on normal daily routine and functioning.

Most people will manage with the support of family and friends, and may be able to remain safely in their own home. Others may need some extra help to keep things on track.

If you test positive for COVID-19, the GP Assessment team doctor who assesses you will offer you additional mental health support from either a trained peer support worker or counsellor. During some of your routine wellbeing checks, the health professional contacting you will ask about your physical and mental wellbeing.

Some things you can do that can help to promote mental wellbeing:

- > Maintain a daily routine, even if it's different to your normal daily routine.
- > Connect with family and friends and other supports in your community using phone or video calling
- > Look after yourself through regular exercise within your room or private balcony/backyard and healthy meals.
- > Engage in a range of self-care strategies and try not to rely on just one, e.g. hot cups of tea, time with your pets, getting outside in the sunshine, or reading a favourite book.
- > Ensure you have some time out to relax, unwind and do activities that you enjoy – switching off from constant news updates for a short period can help with this.
- > Try to minimise exposure to the extensive COVID-19 content on Social Media – ensure you have access to accurate and current information from reliable sources.
- > Talk with your doctor or a counsellor by phone or video call if needed.

For people experiencing significant mental health impacts or those who need more immediate support:

- > **Mental Health Triage - 13 14 65**
Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (country and metropolitan areas)
- > **Is it an emergency?**
If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, **call triple zero (000)**.

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Telephone and online based supports:

SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line (8am - 8pm, 7 days)	1800 632 753
Online chat: www.SACOVIDMentalHealth.org.au	
COVID-19 Mental Health Peer Support Line (5pm - 11:30pm, 7 days)	1800 022 020
(a peer support line delivered by people with lived experience of mental health)	
Online chat: www.skylight.org.au/covid-19-support-line	
ASKPEACE (9am - 5pm, Mon - Fri) www.rasa.org.au/services/all-services/askpeace	08 8245 8110
(mental health support for culturally and linguistically diverse people)	
Thirrili (9am - 5pm, Mon - Fri) www.thirrili.com.au	1800 841 313
(mental health support line for Aboriginal consumers)	
Carers SA www.carerssa.com.au/covid-19	1800 422 737
(for families and carers of the elderly, people with disabilities and mental illness)	
Resource Options and Support for Carers (9am - 5pm, Mon - Fri)	08 8245 7196
Regional Access Program (country areas) (24/7)	1300 032 186
Lifeline Australia	13 11 14
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Kids Helpline (people under 25)	1800 551 800
Youth Beyond Blue (people under 25)	1300 224 636

For more information

SA COVID-19 Information Line 1800 253 787
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID2019

Communicable Disease Control Branch
Department for Health and Wellbeing
SA Health, Government of South Australia

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