

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

## If you test positive with a rapid antigen test, you must:

1. Register your positive test on the [Service NSW website](#) so you can be linked to important health care support and advice based on your COVID-19 risk. If you or someone in your family can't register online, please call Service NSW on 13 77 88.

## If you test positive with a PCR or rapid antigen test, you must:

1. Self-isolate immediately for 7 days. If you have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath after 7 days, please remain in self-isolation until 24 hours after your symptoms have resolved.
2. Tell people that you live with that you have tested positive to COVID-19, and self-isolate from them as much as possible. People in your household must follow the [NSW Health Household and Close Contact Guidelines](#) for at least 7 days after you tested positive.
3. Tell people you spent time with from the 2 days before you started having symptoms or 2 days before you tested positive (whichever came first) that you have COVID-19. This includes your social contacts, workplace and/or school.
4. Monitor your symptoms. If you are concerned you should call your GP, the NSW Health Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933 or the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080. If symptoms become severe call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

## How will my COVID-19 be managed?

When you register your positive rapid antigen test (RAT) result online or over the phone, you will be asked to answer questions that help us determine whether you are at [higher risk of severe illness](#). If you had a positive PCR result, you will be sent a link to similar questions by SMS. Please reply to these questions as soon as you can.

You will also be sent advice on self-isolation and how to look after your illness at home. If you are at [higher risk of severe illness](#), NSW Health will ask you some more questions. This is to check if you're eligible for antiviral or other early treatment for COVID-19. NSW Health is currently working with Healthdirect, the national government-funded virtual health provider, to help those at higher risk of severe illness access antiviral treatment. If you are at higher risk, you will receive a SMS from Healthdirect about discussing antivirals with your GP. If you think you are at higher risk (see below) contact your GP immediately even if you have not received a SMS.

If you are under 60 years of age, up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations, do not suffer from any chronic health conditions and are not pregnant, you can safely look after yourself at home. Most people with COVID-19 will have a mild illness and will recover in a few days or so, with some people having no symptoms at all. You can reach out to NSW Health for care or advice anytime during your illness. Most symptoms can be managed with:

- Bed rest
- Regular paracetamol and ibuprofen to relieve pain and fevers
- Throat lozenges for a sore throat
- 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.

## 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:

- People aged 60 years and older
- Pregnant women (see [What if I am pregnant and have COVID-19?](#))
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people (from age 35 years and over)
- People with obesity, diabetes, serious cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease (including severe asthma requiring hospitalisation the last 12 months), severe chronic liver or kidney disease, active cancer or who are immunocompromised
- Some people with a disability including those with a disability that affects their lungs, heart or immune system
- Residents of aged care and disability care facilities
- People aged 18 years and older who are unvaccinated

Older age is a risk factor for severe illness, particularly when combined with significant underlying health conditions.

### If you are at higher risk of severe illness, contact your GP and tell them you have COVID-19.

If you are at higher risk of severe illness, you may be eligible for antiviral or other early treatment for COVID-19. Antivirals need to be taken within five days of your illness starting, so it's important that you contact your GP straight away after testing positive to COVID-19.

#### Who is eligible for antivirals:

- Everyone aged over 70
- People aged 50 years and older with symptoms and two or more risk factors for severe disease
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged 30 years and older with symptoms and with two or more risk factors for severe illness

Immunocompromised people over the age of 18 may also be eligible.

#### How to access antivirals:

1. If you test positive to COVID-19 or register a positive rapid antigen test, you will receive a survey link and some questions from NSW Health via SMS.
2. If you are identified as higher risk after completing the survey, you will receive an SMS from Healthdirect Australia about discussing antivirals with your GP.
3. Please call your GP to discuss antivirals or other early treatments, as soon as you have tested positive to COVID-19. Antivirals work best when taken early and within 5 days from when your symptoms start.
4. If your GP says you are eligible for oral antivirals, they will send you a prescription (online or paper copy) so you can get the medication from a pharmacy. Its recommended you contact your pharmacy to arrange home delivery for your medication or ask someone to collect it on your behalf and drop it off.

If you cannot contact your GP, you can call Healthdirect on 1800 022 222 or NSW Health's Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933.

## 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, Hydralyte or Gastrolyte.  <b>If you don't improve, call 1800 960 933 or your GP</b>

Am I passing a lot less urine than normal?	Continue to stay hydrated.	Drink more water, Hydralyte or Gastrolyte. <b>If you don't improve, call 1800 960 933 or your GP</b>
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, Hydralyte or Gastrolyte. <b>If you don't improve, call 1800 960 933 or your GP</b>
Do I feel severely dizzy, drowsy or confused?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	<b>Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19</b>
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	<b>Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19</b>
Do I feel like I might faint when I stand?	Continue to follow NSW Health advice for managing COVID-19 at home	<b>Call Triple Zero (000) immediately and tell the ambulance staff you have COVID-19</b>

If you need other clinical support or have non-urgent health related questions during self-isolation, call the **NSW Health Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933**.

## What do I need to do?

### 1. Self-isolate for 7 days

You must self-isolate at home for 7 days from the date you got tested, even if you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccinations. Self-isolation means staying in your home or accommodation and remaining separated from others. Please see the NSW Health COVID-19 [Self-Isolation Guideline](#) for further information on how to self-isolate and what support is available if you need it.

Call the NSW Health Isolation Support Line on 1800 943 553 if you need practical assistance during self-isolation.

### 2. Tell the people you live with that you have tested positive

Your household contacts must follow the advice in the [NSW Health Household and Close Contact Guidelines](#).

If one of your household members has a positive test result at any time, they are now a case. They must isolate for at least 7 days after they tested positive, and follow the information provided in this fact sheet.

### 3. Tell your social contacts that you have tested positive

You may have been infectious from two days before you developed symptoms, or two days before you tested positive if you did not have symptoms.

You should tell any social contacts that you spent time with while you were infectious that you have tested positive. This includes friends and other people you have met socially, such as friends you had dinner with, people you met up with at a pub, club or social function, or friends and family who visited your home.

Tell your contacts to assess their risk and next steps using the [Information for people exposed to COVID-19 fact sheet](#).

### 4. Tell your workplace or educational facility that you have tested positive

You must also tell your work manager or education facility head/relevant staff member that you have tested positive for COVID-19 if you were onsite whilst infectious.

Tell them the date of your test, the date you got sick (if you have symptoms), and the days you were at work/school while you were infectious. They should use this information to assess the risk to your fellow workers or students. Your workplace or school may inform them that they have been exposed to COVID-19, and what action they should take.

You can tell your manager by phone or text, or ask a work friend to tell them for you. If you have attended an educational facility, you can call the main phone number for the campus you attend.

## 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:

- Have plenty of fluids, like you would with a regular cold or flu.
- If you feel unwell, paracetamol can also be taken to help with symptoms. Ibuprofen is not recommended to take while you are pregnant
- It is important to remain hydrated and mobilise regularly to reduce your risk of developing blood clots. If you have a history of blood clots or you are obese, please contact your GP or maternity care provider to discuss your management options.
- It is also important to 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.
- If you have difficulty breathing, develop chest pressure or pain, have severe headaches or dizziness you should call 000 immediately. Ensure that you tell them you have COVID-19 and are pregnant.
- After recovering from COVID-19 it is important to continue your regular antenatal care. If you have missed an antenatal care appointment during your self-isolation, reschedule as soon as possible.

## 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. People with COVID-19 should separate from the rest of their household as much as they can. 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.
- If you are breastfeeding or formula feeding your baby may want more frequent 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, and do not give more of these medicines than is recommended in a 24-hour period, as this may be harmful for children.
- Watch your child for signs that their illness is getting worse.

Monitor your child's condition and call your GP or **NSW Health Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933** or the **National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080** 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 that your child is seriously unwell, has difficulty breathing, is severely dehydrated or fainting, please call Triple Zero (000) immediately** and inform the operator that your child has COVID-19.

## What support is available while I am in self-isolation?

### Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment

- The Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment is financial support to assist if you cannot earn an income because you must self-isolate due to COVID-19 or you are caring for someone with COVID-19.
- To check if you are eligible for the payment, visit [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#).

### COVID-19 support

- If symptoms become severe call Triple Zero (000) immediately.
- If you have health questions during self-isolation that are not urgent, call the NSW Health Flu and COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933. The National Coronavirus Helpline is also available 24/7 on 1800 020 080.
- If you need practical assistance during self-isolation, call the NSW Health Isolation Support Line on 1800 943 553

### 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 which provides a personal wellbeing service with 24/7 access to multilingual chat and phone access to a range of mental health, medical and wellbeing support services

### 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.

## When can I leave self-isolation?

### If you have no symptoms on Day 7

You must self-isolate for 7 days from the day you were tested. You can only leave self-isolation after 7 days if you do not have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath. You do not need to test before leaving self-isolation in NSW.

A link to your medical clearance notice will be sent via SMS from NSW Health. Do not delete this SMS. Click the link in the SMS and download your medical clearance notice. You may be asked to provide evidence of release from self-isolation by your employer, education facility or if travelling internationally.

Wear a mask when near or talking to other people and avoid visiting high risk settings (health care, aged care, disability care or correctional facilities) for a further 3 days. If you work in one of these settings speak to your employer before returning. If you have a severely weakened immune system (such as you are a transplant recipient or are receiving chemotherapy) you should take these additional precautions for a further 4 days (a total of 7 days following release from isolation).

### If you have symptoms on Day 7

If you have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath in the last 24 hours of your isolation, please remain in isolation until 24 hours after your symptoms have resolved. If you are not getting better or you are concerned, call your GP. It's important to stay in self-isolation and call your GP because you may still be infectious. Your GP will be able to provide further support related to your individual circumstances, help you manage your symptoms and assess whether you need further clinical care.

Wear a mask when near or talking to other people and avoid visiting high risk settings (health care, aged care, disability care or correctional facilities) for a further 3 days after you leave isolation. If you work in one of these settings speak to your employer before returning. If you have a severely weakened immune system (such as you are a transplant recipient or are receiving chemotherapy) you should take these additional precautions for a further 4 days (a total of 7 days following release from isolation).

If you have other symptoms after 7 days (e.g. fever, headaches) which are not getting better you can leave isolation but you should contact your GP.

If you are under the care of a clinical team, your team will tell you when you will be released from isolation.

## What happens after I have been released from self-isolation?

Routine COVID-19 testing (such as workplace and school surveillance testing) is not recommended for 4 weeks after you are released from self-isolation.

Generally, you do not need to test or self-isolate if you have had COVID-19 and have been released from self-isolation in the last 4 weeks, because the risk of reinfection is low.

If you have any new [symptoms](#) in the 4 weeks since you have been released, you should stay home until they resolve. If you are at a [higher risk of severe illness](#) and have symptoms during this 4 week period, you should have a COVID-19 test, but talk to your doctor first as they may recommend that you also get tested for other respiratory viruses such as influenza. If you are not at [higher risk of severe illness](#) but experience new symptoms in this period you should talk to your GP as they can provide further support related to your individual circumstances, help you manage your symptoms and assess whether you need further testing or clinical care.

## What if I am exposed to someone with COVID-19 again?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of getting it again in the 4 weeks after you are released as most people develop some immunity (ability to fight the disease).

If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 within 4 weeks after you are released, you will generally not need to self-isolate or get a test. If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 more than 4 weeks after you are released, you will need to follow the advice in the [Information for people exposed to COVID-19](#) and [Get tested for COVID-19](#) fact sheets.

## How soon should I get vaccinated?

If you are eligible for a booster vaccination, it is recommended that you wait 3 months to receive your vaccine after your COVID-19 infection. Get your vaccination as soon as possible after 3 months to strengthen your protection. Everyone aged 16 years and over is strongly recommended to have a booster COVID-19 vaccine.

People who are aged 30 and over are eligible to receive a second booster dose (winter booster) of a COVID-19 vaccine. A second booster is recommended for people aged 50 and over to prevent severe disease. If you are [eligible for a second booster dose](#), you should wait 3 months after your COVID-19 infection to receive it. For further information, see the [COVID-19 vaccines: Frequently asked questions](#) and the [NSW Health Booster vaccination: Frequently asked questions](#).

A temporary exemption from vaccination applies for six weeks from the date of your medical clearance notice. This exemption is valid in NSW only. If you need to be vaccinated for employment, schooling, or other activities in another jurisdiction, please check the rules that apply in that state or territory.