

FAQ

What you need to do if you have tested positive for COVID-19

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COVID
safe

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Important information for people who have COVID-19.

If any of this information is not clear to you, please call the Public Health Hotline on 1800 671 738.

You will have tested positive on a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) or received an SMS from the Department of Health to say you have had a positive PCR test. Here is some important information on what you need to do next.

Look after your health

If you test positive for COVID-19 it is important to look after your health and to get help if needed. If your COVID-19 symptoms worsen call your doctor or the COVID@home care team on **1800 973 363**.

If your symptoms get seriously worse (especially if it happens very suddenly) for example breathlessness or difficulty breathing, or you feel like it is an emergency, call triple zero (000) or go straight to hospital. Make sure you tell them you have COVID-19.

If you can, you should also tell a support person who can check up on you while you are isolating, by phone or online.

You can contact the COVID@home care team to access support for any other health or social needs.

Isolate immediately for at least 7 days

You must stay away from other people. This is called being in isolation.

You must isolate at home or in private accommodation for at least 7 days.

You must not leave your place of isolation unless you are instructed to by emergency services (police, fire, SES or ambulance), Public Health Services, or you need urgent medical care.

You must not go to public places, work, shops, the pharmacy, school, or childcare. You must not visit anyone. You must not have visitors. If you're living with others, isolate away from them.

The only people who should enter your home are the people who live with you (they are close contacts and are required to quarantine), people providing medical or home-care, and emergency service personnel (including police, fire, SES, or ambulance officers) in an emergency situation.

Can I go outside?

If you are isolating in a house with its own private garden/courtyard, you can go outside to your garden/courtyard.

If you are isolating in an apartment you can go onto your private balcony if you have one.

What if I need to see a doctor about something else?

If you need to see a doctor about another health condition, phone to make an appointment with your normal GP.

Tell them you have COVID-19. They will arrange a telehealth appointment. You cannot go to the appointment in person. For after-hours medical services, information is available on the after-hours website ([tasafterhours.com](https://www.tasafterhours.com)) or you can call Healthdirect on **1800 022 222**.

If you already have an appointment to see a doctor or other health professional (for example a midwife or specialist), phone them as soon as you can and tell them you have COVID-19. They will tell you if a telephone appointment is suitable or if the appointment can be delayed.

If your appointment cannot be delayed safely and the doctor or other health professional agrees to see you in person, you need to discuss this with Public Health. If approved, they will talk with you about actions you need to take to protect others.

What if I need more food or medicine?

If you need more food or general household supplies, you can ask a friend, neighbour, or family member to help. Tell them to leave supplies on your doorstep rather than come into your home.

You could also arrange a food delivery service. Make sure you tell them to leave the delivery outside your house. Keep at least 1.5 metres (two or three large steps) from the delivery person.

If you need a prescription filled, arrange this with your usual pharmacist or GP. Ask if your pharmacy has a delivery service or ask a friend or family member to collect the medication for you.

If you need help to have food or medicine delivered, call the Public Health Hotline on **1800 671 738**.

When can I leave isolation?

Everyone is required to isolate for at least 7 days following the day you had your positive RAT or PCR test. The day you had your test is day 0.

If you have no symptoms on day 7 you can leave isolation.

Public Health will send you an email on day 7 of your isolation. This email will contain an official letter of release from isolation and can be used as proof of release or as a medical certificate.

If you have remaining symptoms after 7 days, you should isolate for an additional 3 days for a total of 10 days in isolation.

Cases released from isolation do not need to quarantine if they are re-exposed to a case in their household in the month after their diagnosis. After 1-month cases should get retested if they develop symptoms and quarantine if a household member tests positive for COVID-19.

More information on leaving isolation is available at [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/leaving-isolation](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/leaving-isolation)

Do the people I live with have to stay at home?

Yes. If you have COVID-19, the people living with you now and in the two days before you developed symptoms or tested positive are considered close contacts.

You must inform your close contacts

Your close contacts must stay at home too, even if they are well. This is called quarantine.

You need to contact your close contacts and tell them what to do.

Who are my close contacts?

Close contacts are:

- anyone who lives in your house
- anyone who has visited your home for more than 4 hours over a 24 hour period
- if you have visited another household for more than 4 hours, all members of that household
- a close contact can also be someone that has spent 4 hours at the same site, workplace or venue as a case during a significant transmission event.

People can spread COVID-19 to other people before they start to feel sick or have a positive test result. You must reach out to close contacts you have seen while you have been infectious.

Your infectious period is either:

- from two days before you noticed COVID-19 symptoms
- two days prior to getting tested, where this test provided a positive result.

Information for close contacts is available at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/closecontacts.

What do my close contacts need to do?

Your close contacts need to quarantine immediately for 7 days.

- They need to have a test straight away (on day 1) and again on day 6. They should also have a test immediately if symptoms develop.

If they test positive to COVID-19 on either test, they must isolate immediately. If they test positive on a Rapid Antigen Test they must register their result online at [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/testing](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/testing)

Close contacts can leave quarantine on day 7 if:

- they have received a negative RAT or PCR test result from a test taken on day 6; and
- they have no symptoms.

Direct all your close contacts to [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/closecontacts](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/closecontacts) for full details on what to do.

Quarantine exemptions can be provided for close contacts who work in critical areas. For more information visit [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/criticalworkers](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/criticalworkers) or contact Business Tasmania on 1800 440 026 or email ask@business.tas.gov.au.

What about the people I live with?

If the people living with a positive COVID-19 case have been able to maintain appropriate separation from the confirmed case, and their test on day 6 is negative and they have no symptoms, they can leave quarantine on day 7.

See [“how can I protect people I live with who are not a risk of severe illness”](#) for more information on how to maintain appropriate separation.

Tell your social contacts

You must tell your social contacts that you have tested positive for COVID-19. Social contacts must get tested if they develop any symptoms.

Your social contacts are people who you have had 15 minutes of face-to-face contact with, or spent 2 hours with in the same indoor space.

Your social contacts are not people from home, your workplace or school.

If they develop symptoms, they should get tested immediately and isolate until they receive a negative test result.

People who test positive using a RAT are considered a confirmed COVID-19 case and must register their result online at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/testing

People who are your close contacts cannot follow this advice - close contacts must isolate for 7 days.

Tell your workplace and/or education facility

If you worked onsite while infectious, you must tell your employer/workplace you have tested positive to COVID-19.

Your employer/workplace will tell other staff who are workplace contacts.

If you or your child attended an education facility (school, childcare or early childhood) while infectious, you must tell the education facility you have tested positive for COVID-19.

The education facility will tell other students and staff who are education contacts.

How can I protect people I live with who are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19?

It's important to protect the people you live with.

This is especially important for people you live with who are at risk of severe illness.

Those at risk of severe illness are those people:

- over the age of 70 years
- receiving immune suppressive therapy following organ transplant
- who have had a bone marrow transplant in the last 24 months or are on immune suppressive therapy for graft versus host disease
- with blood cancers such as leukaemia, lymphoma, or myelodysplastic syndrome, diagnosed within the last five years
- having chemotherapy or radiotherapy.

People at risk of moderate illness include those with chronic (long-term) health conditions like diabetes, lung disease, heart disease, severe obesity, cancer, and kidney failure.

If you live with anyone at risk of severe or moderate illness from COVID-19, it's best if they (or you) can stay elsewhere. Seek advice from Public Health by phoning **1800 671 738**.

How can I protect people I live with who are not at risk of severe illness?

Stay apart

- Stay in a separate room as much as you can. Avoid shared areas like the kitchen or lounge room.
- Sleep in a separate bed and use a separate bathroom if you can.
- If you must be in the same room, be as quick as you can, try to keep at least 1.5 metres (two very large steps) away and wear a facemask.
- Don't share dishes, glasses, cups, cutlery, towels, bedding, toothbrushes, or other items with people in your house. Do not share food or drinks.

Watch your personal hygiene

Wash your hands often, especially:

- before going to a room you share with others or touching things other people use.
- after coughing, sneezing, nose blowing, touching your face, smoking, eating, and going to the toilet.
- Always cover coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue (if available), put the tissue straight in the bin, and finish by washing your hands. If you don't have a tissue handy, use the inside of your elbow.
- Wash your hands with soap and water. Get a good soap lather and rub for at least 20 seconds. Dry them well too. Alcohol-based hand rub is OK to use if your hands look clean.

Keep your living spaces clean

Clean frequently touched surfaces at least daily. This includes bench/tabletops, doorknobs, sink taps, bathroom surfaces and toilets, bedside tables, phones, keyboards, and tablets.

Use a detergent followed by a disinfectant for all cleaning (or a 2-in-1 product). The recommended disinfectant is 1000 parts per million (ppm) of bleach/chlorine. Always use freshly made solutions.

If you get any spit, blood, or other body waste on any surface, clean it well with detergent and disinfectant and put the cloth in the wash or the rubbish.

Put your dirty clothes and sheets straight in the washing machine when you remove them. Wash your hands after handling dirty washing. Use your normal clothes detergent.

Wash dishes and cutlery well. Use a dishwasher if you can.

If someone wants to clean your room, ask them to put on a facemask and disposable/single use gloves before entering the room. Tell them to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand rub before and after wearing gloves.

Remove rubbish

Put used face masks, tissues, and other rubbish straight into a plastic rubbish bag in your bin then wash your hands. Only use disposable facemasks once.

Tie a knot in the rubbish bag before putting it out for collection. If you don't have a collection service, tie a knot in the bag and store it in a metal or plastic bin safely until you can get it to the rubbish tip. Wash your hands after handling rubbish.

How can I support a child in isolation or quarantine?

The Tasmanian Department of Education has advice on how to talk to your child about COVID-19. Find it at coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/schools.

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

If well enough, treat isolation as an opportunity to do some of those things you never usually have time for, such as board games, craft, puzzles, and drawing.

How can I look after my mental health?

Being concerned about having COVID-19 and coping with isolation and restrictions can result in complex feelings.

Below are some tips to help you look after yourself.

- **Stay connected:** talk to friends and family members on the phone and keep in touch through email and social media.
- **Call for support:** think about how you have coped with difficult situations before. Use strategies that have helped you before.
- **Keep active:** find ways to keep your body active while you are in isolation. Even if you feel unwell, it's important to take regular deep breaths and move around.
- **Keep routines:** try to keep some of your usual daily routines going. Eat at usual times and keep to your usual sleeping routine.
- **Eat well.** Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables.
- **Set limits.** Avoid increasing your use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Consider reducing your use instead.
- **Get help:** seek help early if you are concerned about your health in any way. See the list of support services and resources that follow.

Support resources and services

- **Lifeline Australia:** phone **13 11 14** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), [lifeline.org.au](https://www.lifeline.org.au).
A crisis support service offering immediate short-term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.
- **Head to Health:** [headtohealth.gov.au](https://www.headtohealth.gov.au)
Provides easy access to a wide range of online mental health resources including apps, online programs, online forums, phone services and digital information resources.
- **Beyond Blue:** phone **1800 512 348** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). [coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://www.coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)
- **Headspace:** phone **1800 650 893** (9:00 am to 1:00 am, seven days a week), [headspace.org.au/eheadspace](https://www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace)
Online and webchat support and counselling for 12 to 25-year-olds, their families and friends.
- **Tasmanian Mental Health Helpline:** phone **1800 332 388** (24 hours, seven days a week).
For mental health advice, assessment, and referral. The service is staffed by community mental health clinicians who can assess your information and determine the most appropriate action, for example:
 - refer you to a Mental Health Community team in your area
 - refer you to a Community Mental Health Crisis Response team that is available during extended working hours, seven days a week.
 - provide contact details for another service that might be more suitable for you.
- **Mensline:** phone **1300 78 99 78** (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), [mensline.org.au](https://www.mensline.org.au).
Professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men.
- **Mindspot:** phone **1800 61 44 34** (8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday; 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Saturday), [mindspot.org.au](https://www.mindspot.org.au).
Free telephone and online service for people with stress, worry, anxiety, low mood or depression. It provides online assessment and treatment for anxiety and depression and can help you find local services.

More information about supporting mental health support is available on the Tasmanian Government website at [coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/support-services](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/keeping-yourself-safe/support-services).

If you are worried or upset, call Lifeline on **13 11 14** or Beyond Blue on **1300 224 636**. In an emergency, call **000**.

How can I stay informed?

It's important to stay informed as the situation changes.

For information about COVID-19 in Tasmania, go to [coronavirus.tas.gov.au](https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au) or call the Public Health Hotline on **1800 671 738**.

For information about COVID-19 in Australia, go to [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au) or call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on **1800 020 080**.