

Home isolation guidance - Novel Coronavirus 2019 (2019-nCoV)

Close contacts & recently returned travellers from mainland China



Updated - 1 February 2020

If you have been in contact with a person with confirmed novel coronavirus infection while they were infectious, you must quarantine (isolate) yourself for 14 days after your last contact with that person.

If you have recently returned from travel to Hubei Province, you must isolate yourself for 14 days after you left Hubei Province.

If you arrived in Australia after 1 February after travelling to, or transiting through, mainland China (excluding Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) you must isolate yourself at home for 14 days after you left China.

Stay at home or in your hotel

You should restrict activities outside your home/hotel, except for seeking medical care. You should not go to work, school, or public areas, and you should not use public transportation, taxis or ride-sharing services.

Monitor symptoms

When in quarantine, you should monitor yourself for symptoms. Watch for:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath (difficulty breathing)
- other early symptoms to watch for are chills, body aches, sore throat, headache and runny nose, muscle pain or diarrhoea

If you develop symptoms and it is a medical emergency (e.g. shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing) you should call 000. Alert ambulance staff of your travel/contact history.

If you develop symptoms that are not serious you should call the public health unit (1300 066 055). The public health unit can arrange for medical assessment at a health facility (usually a hospital emergency department) and will call ahead to ensure your health facility visit is managed safely.

Separate yourselves from other people in their home

If you are sharing the home with others, as much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people or be separated as much as possible. Wear a surgical mask when you are in the same room as another person and when seeking medical care. Use a separate bathroom, if available.

Make sure that you do not share a room with people who are at risk of severe disease, such as elderly people and those who have heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.

Visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home should not visit while you are in quarantine.

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Wash your hands

You should wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Please wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser before entering an area or touching things used by other people.

Advice for others in the household

Other members of the household are not required to be isolated unless they have also travelled to Hubei Province, or also arrived in Australia after 1 February after travel to, or transit through, mainland China, or are also a contact.

Going outside

If you live in a private house, then it is safe for you to go outside into your garden or courtyard. Wear a surgical mask if there is anyone else there.

If you live in an apartment it is also safe for you to go outside into the garden while wearing a surgical mask. However you should go quickly through any common areas on the way to the garden. Wear a surgical mask if you have to move through these areas. It's safe to go onto your balcony if you have one.

Keeping spirits up in quarantine at home

Being under quarantine can be frightening, particularly for young children. Suggestions include:

- Talk to the other members of the family about the infection. Understanding novel coronavirus will reduce anxiety.
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Keep up a normal daily routine as much as possible.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Think about how you have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure yourself that you will cope with this situation too. Remember that quarantine won't last for long.
- Keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or social media.
- Exercise regularly. Options could include exercise DVDs, dancing, floor exercises, yoga, walking around the backyard or using home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, if you have it. Exercise is a proven treatment for stress and depression.

Reducing boredom while in quarantine at home

Being confined to home for an extended period of time can cause boredom, stress and conflict. Suggestions include:

- Arrange with your employer to work from home, if possible.
- Ask your child's school to supply assignments, work sheets and homework by post or email.
- Don't rely too heavily on the television and technology. Treat quarantine as an opportunity to do some of those things you never usually have time for, such as board games, craft, drawing and reading.