

Isolating at home

Appendix 5



If you choose to isolate at home, it can mean less disruption to your life. You can be comfortable in your own environment and find things to do around the house to help pass the time.

Despite this, any length of isolation can be difficult, especially if you are the only one in the home isolating or have small children or other family members to care for.

Here are some tips for different situations that you might be faced with.

You or someone else in the family are isolating with others in the same house.

To help lower the chances of COVID-19 being spread in the home, there are important things you can do to lower the chances of spreading the virus.

It's important to:

- **Set a room aside for the people who need to isolate.** They should not leave the room unless they are seeking medical attention. They will need to have access to their own bathroom.
- **Leave meals and other supplies at the door of the room.** Leave a safe amount of time between the meal drop off and when it is collected to ensure no 'open door' contact. It is a good idea to use disposable plates and cutlery and leave these in the room in a designated bin with a liner for disposal later. If you need to collect anything from the person in isolation, make sure you wear gloves and a mask and wash or sanitise your hands after.
- **Clean surfaces you and others touch often.** Disinfectant surface cleaners and disposable cloths, i.e. paper towel. NSW Health suggests cleaning surfaces with detergent then wiping with a diluted bleach solution, 1 tablespoon bleach to 4 cups of water.
- **Wash your hands regularly with soap and water.** Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds and make sure to get between your fingers and under your nails. You may also use hand sanitiser if available. Key moments for hand hygiene include before and after touching common surfaces like door handles, after using bathroom, after coughing/sneezing, before putting on or after removing gloves and mask.
- **If you must be in the same room or need to move between parts of the house, always wear a mask and keep 2 big steps apart.** Wash your hand with antibacterial hand wash or use hand gel before and after contact.



If you choose to isolate at home with others, you accept the risk that the virus could be passed on even if you try our best to keep COVID safe. In some cases, isolating in the home may not be possible, especially if people are elderly or have disease that affect their heart, lungs or kidneys.

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You are isolating with children

Being a parent is hard work at the best of times, especially if you are on your own with no help. Being in a small space with babies and children can be stressful. It is important to remember that this is a difficult time for everyone, including children.

Try to:

- **Stay as calm as possible.** If you feel yourself getting worked up, put the baby down in a safe place or ensure older children are safe and go to another part of the house for a few minutes. Take some deep breaths, have a cup of tea or just take a few moments for yourself.
- **Find things that you and your children can do together.** This is a great time to share a book or a yarn, watch a movie or do some craft together. Be creative, Google some ideas on the internet – you'll be surprised what you can do with basic household items.
- **Get older children and adults in the home to help with younger children** to give you a rest.
- **Stay connected with your friends and family.** When times get tough, give someone you trust a call – have a yarn about how you are feeling. This can make all the difference and is also important for children.
- **Set up a routine.** Maintaining a routine while in isolation can be beneficial for both adults and children.
- **Caring for infants.** It is important when caring for infants or others that you continue to wear a mask and maintain hand hygiene. Breastfeeding mothers with COVID-19 are encouraged to continue to breastfeed with precautions in place such as, handwashing before/after touching baby/pump/bottles, wear a mask during feeding times.

Don't forget you can contact **Parent Line NSW on 1300 130 052** for any concerns about bub or your older children's health during isolation. They also provide support and telephone counselling if you just need a yarn. For more information, visit <https://www.parentline.org.au/>



It is important to remember that babies and children can feel stress when the people who care for them are stressed. If you are stressed, chances are that they are too. When children are stressed, this can often be displayed through their behaviour. Try and stay calm and provide the warm, loving care they need to feel safe and secure.

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There are more arguments than usual

Sharing a space with others can be difficult in general. Being isolated with people, even those we love, can put pressure on our relationships and cause unwanted problems. If you were already having some problems in your home life, isolation can sometimes make these problems worse.

Remember:

- **Everyone is having a hard time** and you are all in this together.
- **Isolation is not forever, the situation will pass.** Take one day at a time and try to stay positive.
- **To give each other space**, as much as you can.
- **There is absolutely no excuse for abuse or violence!** There is help available 24 hours and 7 days a week for those experiencing domestic or family violence or abuse.

If you are impacted by domestic or family violence or abuse, call:

1800 Respect

1800 737 732

or chat online at www.chat.1800respect.org.au

Momentum Collective

1300 900 091

between 8.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday.



Remember, if you feel unsafe at any time during isolation, you **CAN** leave your home to seek help.

If you are in immediate danger, call 000 for police and ambulance.

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You or someone else is not coping during isolation

Many people struggle with isolation, especially if they are away from family, friends and community. It is important to stay connected with people so that you can support one another.

Remember:

- **Check in with family and friends regularly** – phone, video chat or connect on social media.
- **Encourage friends and family to seek help if they need it.** They could have a yarn to a professional about how they are feeling. There are helplines such as Lifeline 13 11 14 and Beyond Blue 1800 512 348 that can be a great help.
- **If you are worried about your own or someone else's mental health,** contact the NSW Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.
- Older persons COVID-19 support line 1800 171 866 can provide more specific advice and support for older Australians and their carers.
- See the Gayaa Dhuwi wellbeing resources provided for more information on staying healthy, strong and connected.

Extra resources:

www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others-from-coronavirus-covid-19/isolation-for-coronavirus-covid-19

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/self-isolation-covid-and-close.aspx

www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/coronavirus-covid-19-booklet-keep-our-mob-safe.pdf

www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Documents/How-do-I-self-isolate-flyer.pdf