

Community (home) based COVID-19 care

30 December 2021

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you must immediately:

- Self-isolate in your home or accommodation.
- Tell the following people that you have tested positive for COVID-19:
 - people staying at your house
 - friends and other people you have met socially for 15 minutes or more in an indoor place without a mask:
 - from 2 days before you got sick until now, or
 - if you had no symptoms, from 2 days before your test until now
 - your manager at your workplace
 - your school / university / education facility.

You do not have to tell your contacts if you feel too unwell, or if you do not feel safe to do so.

If you need help, call the **COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872**. If you are having severe headaches or dizziness, difficulty breathing or chest pain, call Triple Zero (000) straight away and tell the ambulance staff that you have COVID-19.

There will be no cost for this ambulance.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE IF I HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

SA Health will contact you via SMS as soon as the team are notified about your result.

If you have any questions or concerns about your health, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.



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WHAT IS COMMUNITY (HOME) BASED CARE?

Community (home) based COVID-19 care is for patients who test positive to COVID-19 and can be cared for in their homes with medical, social and mental health supports.

It is suitable for COVID-19 patients who have no symptoms, or mild to moderate symptoms, to be safely cared for at home. It allows patients to be cared for outside of a hospital, in the comfort of their home.

Community (home) based COVID-19 care is coordinated and delivered by the COVID-19 Response Care Team, including nurses, doctors and other professionals, who will assess and monitor patients virtually, and then connect patients with the care they need. This may include arranging for a patient to go to a COVID Care Centre for additional health treatment if they need it (for example, IV antibody infusion treatments, chest x-rays and other treatment that can't be provided at home).

Why am I receiving home-based care?

Most people with COVID-19 do not need to go to hospital.

Many people with COVID-19 will have mild to moderate symptoms (and some may not have any symptoms), which means they can be safely cared for at home, with appropriate monitoring and care.

Staying at home:

- > provides a more comfortable recovery in a familiar home environment
- > keeps hospital beds free for patients who need acute care
- > stops possible transmission of COVID-19 in hospitals.

The COVID-19 Response Care Team will refer people who become very unwell to a hospital.

Is it safe for me to be at home?

People with low, mild or moderate care needs can be safely cared for through the COVID-19 Community (home) based care program.

Your care will be coordinated by a team of health professionals (COVID-19 Response Care Team) who will assess your condition and any risk factors and decide the best type of care for you.

Your health and wellbeing will be monitored by the team, and if they think you need a higher level of care, including transfer to Hospital in the Hotel, they will arrange this for you.



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What happens if I get very sick while I'm at home?

If you start to feel very unwell, such as severe headaches or dizziness, difficulty breathing, chest pain or any other medical emergency, you should immediately:

- > **call triple zero (000) for an ambulance** (tell them you have COVID-19 and are isolating at home).

As a COVID-19 patient in community quarantine, you will not be charged for an ambulance if you need one.

If you have non-urgent questions about your care or would like to speak to a doctor, nurse or midwife, call:

- > COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.

For general questions and queries, call:

- > COVID-19 Information line on 1800 253 787 (8am-8pm, everyday).
- > COVID-19 Mental Health Support line on 1800 632 753 (8am-8pm, everyday).

WHAT IS THE COVID-19 RESPONSE CARE TEAM?

The COVID-19 Response Care Team coordinates the assessment and care of all people in the community who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are isolating at home during their recovery.

The COVID-19 Response Care Team will work with you and other service providers to ensure you receive the care and support you need to recover from COVID-19 safely and comfortably at home by:

- > sending health check SMS
- > arranging additional care that you need
- > coordinating your medical clearance once you have recovered from COVID-19 to allow you to leave home.

The COVID-19 Response Care Team includes doctors, nurses and other health professionals, all specially trained to manage the care of COVID-19 patients.

They provide a 24/7 virtual service (via telephone) and will assist you with monitoring your own health and connecting you with any care you may need, to help you stay well and keep healthy.



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While you are under the care of the COVID-19 Response Care Team:

- > You will be sent an initial SMS to better understand your healthcare needs. If you can't respond by SMS please call 1800 272 872 and discuss your healthcare needs with our nursing team.
- > A clinical observation kit will be delivered to your home, which contains a thermometer, pulse oximeter (to measure your heart rate), and other items. The kit usually arrives within 48 hours of your diagnosis through a courier service and left at the front door. This will help you to monitor your health and provide the COVID-19 Response Care Team with important information about the progress of your recovery.
- > You will receive contact from doctors and nurses, as needed, to check your health and wellbeing and discuss your care needs. Your usual doctor may be contacted if you have chronic conditions.
- > You can contact the COVID-19 Response Care Team by phone call at any time of the day to talk about how you are feeling, ask questions, seek help or information.
- > If you need more care (for COVID-19 or a non-COVID-19 condition), the COVID-19 Response Care Team will arrange this for you, either delivered to your home or by being transferred to another location (for example, a COVID Care Centre, Hospital in the Hotel, regional supervised care facility or hospital).
- > You will need to stay at home until you have recovered from COVID-19 and have received clearance by SA Health to end your self-isolation.

DO I HAVE TO PAY FOR MY COVID-19 CARE?

There will be no cost to you for the care you receive for COVID-19, including if you need to:

- > access care delivered in your home
- > access care delivered at a COVID Care Centre
- > move into another type of care (e.g. hospital or a supervised facility)
- > call for an ambulance due to COVID-19.

WHAT DOES COVID-19 FEEL LIKE?

It is normal to feel unwell with COVID-19 and everyone experiences symptoms differently. Common symptoms include a headache, fever, sore throat, runny nose and tiredness. In some cases, people feel worse around days 5 to 7 as part of the illness. Feeling short of breath on walking, lightheaded when standing, or having diarrhoea greater than 4 times a day, are symptoms that should be further reviewed by our clinical team.

Please remember to report symptoms via the daily Symptom Checker SMS and also on the telephone to the clinical team. If you are worried about your symptoms, please call 1800 272 872.



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Common symptoms (the way you feel)

Common symptoms of COVID-19 infection include:

- > Fever (high temperature)
- > Cough
- > Shortness of breath
- > Loss of taste and smell
- > Fatigue
- > Headache.

You may experience some, none or all the symptoms listed above. You may also experience:

- > Muscle aches
- > Runny nose
- > Abdominal pain
- > Difficulties with memory or confusion
- > Loss of appetite
- > Diarrhoea.

Resting and drinking plenty of fluids, such as water, like you would with a regular cold or flu, can help. If you feel unwell, paracetamol and ibuprofen can also be taken to help with symptoms. Please contact the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872 if you have any health concerns, especially if you have any chronic health conditions.

Severe symptoms

When isolating, you should look out for severe or worsening symptoms, particularly:

- > Severe headaches or dizziness
- > Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- > Chest pressure or pain.

If you have severe symptoms, you should call Triple Zero (000) straight away and tell the ambulance staff that you have COVID-19.

WHICH COVID-19 VARIANT DO I HAVE?

Due to the number of cases in South Australia, variant testing, called genomics, is no longer performed for all cases. The isolation and testing requirements remain the same for all COVID-19 positive cases, regardless of the variant type. The most common variant now in South Australia is the Omicron Variant.



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I AM NOT VACCINATED, SHOULD I GET MYSELF VACCINATED NOW THAT I AM POSITIVE?

You should not receive a COVID-19 vaccine while unwell with COVID-19 infection, however, you can be vaccinated after you have recovered from your acute illness. Please discuss with your general practitioner if you have any concerns.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY HEALTH AND WELLBEING?

There are some things you can do to help manage your symptoms and recovery from COVID-19.

Fever

Fever or a high temperature is a common symptom of COVID-19. The average body temperature is around 37°C (98.6°F), but this can change from person to person. It also changes during the day, rising a bit after you eat or exercise, and is often higher in the afternoon than when you first wake up in the morning.

Tips for managing a fever include:

- > Drink plenty of fluids to help cool your body and prevent dehydration
- > Apply a damp cloth to your forehead and wrists
- > Dress lightly (even if you have chills)
- > Get plenty of rest
- > Take paracetamol as directed.

If you have a fever of 38°C (102.2°F) or more, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.

Cough

A cough is a common symptom of COVID-19. You may experience a persistent, dry cough which can be irritating and lead to inflammation of the upper airways, your nose and throat.

Some tips to reduce your cough include:

- > Having regular sips of water
- > Breathing in and out through your nose (rather than your mouth)
- > Sipping on honey and lemon drink
- > Sucking on lollies or similar
- > Avoid lying flat on your back. Instead try lying on your side or propped up with a pillow.



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Breathing

Feeling breathless when being active or doing exercise is common if you have COVID-19. This can be scary and make you anxious, which can make you more breathless. Learning to control your breathing can reduce your anxiety and feelings of breathlessness. It is important not to panic. If you are using the oxygen saturation probe / pulse oximeter on your finger, your oxygen levels should be above 95%. If you have false or gel finger nails, this can be placed on the toe.

Fatigue

Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms experienced by people with COVID-19. It can feel like extreme tiredness or lack of energy. Fatigue can be physical and/or mental. Many daily activities can be affected by fatigue such as eating, washing, talking to friends and family, preparing a meal or playing with your children.

Physical fatigue

Fatigue can feel like your body is very heavy and/or moving takes a lot of energy.

Mental fatigue

Mental fatigue can feel like thinking, concentrating or taking in new information is hard. Fatigue can affect people differently and change from day to day or hour to hour. Fatigue can leave you unmotivated to do things. It can also be difficult to explain to family and friends. Not enough or poor-quality sleep can make fatigue worse.

Food and fluid

Your body needs good, healthy food to help fight COVID-19 infection and support recovery. Tips to maintain good nutrition include:

- > Eat a balanced diet with lots of fruit and vegetables
- > Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day, unless your doctor says otherwise
- > Monitor the colour of your urine – pale yellow means you are well hydrated, whereas dark yellow means you are dehydrated and should drink more fluids. If drinking more fluids does not improve the colour of your urine (to pale yellow) you should tell the COVID-19 Response Care Team.

You may not feel hungry or find eating hard if you are breathless or feeling sick. Try eating small amounts of food and taking sips of water more frequently.



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Sleep

Getting enough sleep is important for your wellbeing and recovery from COVID-19. Sometimes sleeping too much can make fatigue worse. Try to find a good balance. Tips for sleep include:

- > Make sure the room is dark and quiet
- > Limit using your phone, devices or watching TV in bed
- > Try to go to bed around the same time each night
- > Avoid caffeine, smoking and alcohol, especially before going to bed
- > Avoid exercise or heavy meals shortly before going to bed.

Sometimes it can be hard to fall asleep if you are thinking about lots of things, or if you feel anxious. If you haven't been able to sleep after 20 minutes or so, try getting up and doing something relaxing (with the lights low or off), until you're tired and then try to sleep again.

If you use a CPAP machine to help you sleep, please tell the COVID-19 Response Care Team. It is important to use your CPAP machine while you have COVID-19.

Mental health

Having COVID-19 or being in isolation can be stressful and may make you feel anxious. It is very important to take care of your mental health during this time.

Tips for looking after your mental health:

- > Keep in contact with friends and family
- > Maintain a daily routine
- > Practice meditation, relaxation or mindfulness
- > Ask for help and support.

Information about mental health support services and phone numbers can be found on the last page of this information pack.

Rest and recovery

When recovering from illness, such as COVID-19, it is common for your symptoms and energy levels to change (sometimes better and sometimes worse). If you are feeling well, you may try to do more things, but this could make you feel unwell and you may need to rest.

Remember that you need rest to recover. All activity takes up energy (physical, mental and emotional). Keep a daily routine as much as you can and rest when you need to.



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Longer term recovery from COVID-19

COVID-19 can cause other health issues, which may continue even after you have “recovered” (are no longer COVID-19 positive) and you have been released from isolation.

You may still have some symptoms when you are not COVID-19 positive. The time it takes to recover will change from person to person.

WHEN CAN I LEAVE SELF-ISOLATION?

People with COVID-19 must self-isolate at home, even if fully vaccinated, as per national and state-based Communicable Disease Control Branch (CDCB) guidelines.

You can leave isolation 10 days after your positive test is taken, unless otherwise advised by SA Health. You must have no symptoms for at least 3 days before you can leave isolation.

If you have persistent acute symptoms or fever, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872. Once you test positive for COVID-19 no further tests are required, this includes clearance swabs, which are likely to continue to be positive. This includes PCR and rapid antigen tests. This is due to shedding of the virus, which is where the inactive virus continues to be present in your body and may sometimes be detected on PCR swabs up to 3 months after the infection.

WHAT ABOUT OTHERS I LIVE WITH (WHO ARE NOT YET POSITIVE)?

You should isolate away from those in your home, who have not yet tested positive, as best you can. This may include staying at opposite ends of your house.

How long they need to isolate for and how many times they need to be tested depends on whether they are vaccinated or not.

If they can quarantine away from you in alternative accommodation, unvaccinated household contacts must isolate for 14 days from their last exposure and get tested immediately and on day 13 of isolation.

If they can quarantine away from you in alternative accommodation, vaccinated household contacts must isolate for 7 days from their last exposure and get tested immediately and on day 6 of isolation.

If they cannot quarantine in alternative accommodation, they must remain in quarantine for your 10-day isolation and then quarantine for an additional 7 days if vaccinated, or 14 days if not vaccinated, after your isolation period ends.

For more information for close contacts, visit the SA Health website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au.



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WELFARE AND MEDICAL SUPPORT

If you need other support or have non-urgent health questions during self-isolation, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.

Food and other supplies

Ask your family or friends who do not live with you to help by delivering groceries and medicines as needed, or you can order food online or by telephone. Major supermarkets, such as Coles and Woolworths, can deliver to most areas.

Ask them to leave the food on your doorstep and wait until they have left before opening the door with a mask on. If you have no other way of getting food or other essentials, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.

Mental health and domestic violence support

For mental health support

- > SA COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line: 1800 632 753 (8am - 8pm, 7 days)
- > Mental Health Emergency Triage Service: 12 14 65 (24 hours, 7 days)
- > ASKPEACE for culturally and linguistic diverse communities: (08) 8245 8110 (9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- > Thirrili for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander communities: 1800 841 313 (9am - 5pm, Monday to Friday)
- > Lived Experience Telephone Support Service (LETSS): 1800 013 755 (5pm - 11.30pm, 7 days)
- > Regional access: 1300 032 186 or saregionalaccess.org.au (24 hours, 7 days)
- > Red Cross (support and wellbeing): 1800 188 071
- > Parent Helpline: 1300 364 100
- > Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or www.kidshelpline.com.au
- > Beyond Blue helpline: 1800 512 348
- > Lifeline: 13 11 14

For domestic violence support

- > National sexual assault and domestic violence helpline 1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)

If you are unsure or have any concerns, call the COVID-19 Response Care Team on 1800 272 872.

