

How do I isolate a family member who has coronavirus at home?

The person who has COVID-19 should stay at home and not go anywhere until they are well or unless their health worsens.

- They need to be isolated in a room and separated from other people in the home.
- They need to sleep in a separate room and if possible, use a separate bathroom, if available. If this is not possible, the person should be the last to use the bathroom for the day and afterwards it should be cleaned with hot water and detergent then disinfected by using bleach.

When caring for a family member with respiratory (COVID-19) infections, you should *follow standard precautions*.

Standard precautions include performing hand hygiene before and after every time you touch the family member; using personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, gown and appropriate mask, depending on your expected exposure, i.e you will only need mask and gloves if you are passing the person their medication, all the PPE will be needed if you are helping them to have a shower; following good respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and regular cleaning of the environment and equipment.

Wearing face masks

When masks are worn, correct use and disposal are essential to ensure they are effective and to avoid any increase in spreading COVID-19.

- **Do not** reuse single masks.
- Cloth masks (e.g. cotton or gauze or homemade masks) are **not** recommended under any circumstances.
- Place the mask carefully, ensuring it covers the mouth and nose, and secure it to minimise any gaps between the face and the mask. **Do not touch the mask** while wearing it.
- Replace the mask as soon as it becomes damp, or every hour, with a new clean, dry mask.
- When removing the mask, do not touch the front of the mask; only use the ear loops.

- Throw away single use masks after each use, disposing of them immediately upon removal into a bin.
- After removing a mask, wash your hands with soap and water or use a hand sanitiser.

Who should stay in the home?

- Ideally, only household members who are caring for the person should stay in the home.
- Restrict any visitors who are not essential.
- Support workers can enter, make sure they are told about the family member having COVID-19 and check they have their PPE.
- Keep older people and people who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions away from the person. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes, even if they are family.

General advice

- Try to ensure good ventilation, by opening doors and windows, weather permitting.
- Do not share dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with the family member who is ill.
- After using any of these items, they should be thoroughly washed; dishes in a dishwasher if available.
- The person who is ill is encouraged and prompted to either sneeze into their inner-elbow or cover their mouth when sneezing and coughing. If using tissues, they are to be thrown in a rubbish bin and hands thoroughly washed immediately.
- Both you and the supported person should be washing your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Laundry

- Laundry can be done with the other family laundry, on the hot cycle. Do not shake your sheets and towels before putting them in the machine. This minimises the possibility of spreading the virus through the air.
- Clothes hampers that have held your laundry should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

General house cleaning

Other surfaces in shared areas, such as door handles, taps and benches, should be cleaned daily. Any surface which may have secretions on them should be immediately cleaned with hot water and detergent then disinfected by using bleach.

If the illness is worsening, or if your family member is having difficulty breathing or are seriously unwell and it is an emergency, [phone triple zero \(000\)](#) immediately. Tell the operator about your situation. If your family member is feeling worse, see a doctor as soon as possible.

References

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