COVID-19-related isolation is about quarantining yourself and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This is different from social or physical distancing. It means not leaving your house for two weeks (14 days).

Who should quarantine / self-isolate?

You must physically isolate yourself if any of the following applies to you:

- you have COVID-19
- you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19

You MUST isolate yourself for 14 days.
What does self-isolation mean?

Isolation means staying at home or in your hotel, not attending public places (even the shops) and monitoring your health for signs of illness.

Can I go outside?

Only for a doctor’s appointment or if you have a private balcony or backyard. If you need to leave the house for a medical appointment, please wear a surgical mask and wash your hands frequently with soap and water. If you are unable to wash your hands with soap and water, please use 60% alcohol-based hand sanitiser (not all hand sanitisers are 60% alcohol, you should read the label).

If you need to travel to a doctor, use a private vehicle, where possible. If using public transport or Uber/taxi to travel to the doctor, avoid busy transport and maintain physical distancing guidelines. Don’t forget to wear a surgical mask and cover your mouth / nose when you cough and sneeze with your elbow. If you don’t have a mask cover your nose and mouth with a scarf.

What if I live with others?

Others that live with you are not required to be isolated unless they meet one of the isolation criteria outlined above. If you develop symptoms and are confirmed to have COVID-19, they will be classified as close contacts and will need to be isolated.

How do I get food?

The people you are living with who are not in isolation are able to bring food back to the house, and friends and family can deliver food to your door, they are just not allowed inside.

Food can also be ordered online and delivered to your house. If collecting food from a delivery, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and wear a surgical mask when receiving the groceries or opt for the groceries to be left at the door. Most places offer contact-less delivery now.

What happens if I am feeling unwell?

If you are worried about your health and feeling symptoms of a sore throat, fever, cough, tiredness and shortness of breath, call your local doctor or COVID-19 National Hotline on 1800 020 080 and explain that you are feeling unwell.

It is recommended you clean surfaces that are frequently touched like door handles, light switches, kitchens and bathrooms with household detergent or disinfectant.

If you have serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing, call 000 for urgent medical help.

What if I start feeling lonely, sad or anxious?
It is normal to feel anxious during periods of uncertainty. But if you’re feeling sad, lonely or anxious call a friend or a family member to talk. If this is not an option, Lifeline is available 24/7 on 131 114. You could also work through some online self-help resources from This Way Up.

What am I going to do all day?

If you’re feeling unwell sleep, rest, drink plenty of fluids such as water and soups and let your body recover. Foods rich in vitamin C such as fruits and vegetables are also good for the immune system.

It’s important to remember physical isolation doesn’t mean social isolation

It’s important to connect with friends and family regularly. Phone or connect regularly online. Anything virtual is OK, but you cannot have friends and family over to your house. Avoid as much contact as possible with the people you live with in your house.

More information on how to isolate

For more information on isolation, particularly in relation to shared accommodation, please go directly to the current information on NSW Health. Chinese language versions are available in simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese.

NSW Health has developed specific isolation guides in languages other than English for if you are:

- sick (Simplified Chinese, Farsi and Korean)
- not sick (Simplified Chinese, Italian, Farsi and Korean)