

# Caring for yourself and others who have, or may have, COVID-19 at home

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This provides information for people who have:

- Confirmed (or probable) COVID-19, who do not need to be hospitalised and
- confirmed COVID-19 who were hospitalised and for whom hospitalisation is medically not required anymore.

If your health care provider has determined that you do not need to be hospitalised and can be treated at home, you will be contacted by local public health staff. You should follow the instructions below until you are told that you can return to your normal activities.

## Separate yourself from other people in your home

As much as possible, you should stay in a room by yourself. It should be well-ventilated (eg, open windows), but you should keep the door closed. Keep your distance from other people in your home. This means eating meals in your room by yourself, limiting your movements in shared spaces and using a separate bathroom if possible. If you can, try to have one person who is in good health looking after you. You should not have any visitors.

## Stay home, except to get medical care

You should only leave your home or accommodation to get urgent medical care. Do not go to work, school or public areas. Do not use public transportation, ride-sharing services or taxis. You will need to put off or cancel any non-urgent appointments (eg, going to the dentist, hairdresser, eye appointments etc.) until you are advised that you no longer need to stay in isolation.

## Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have an urgent medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help their office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

## Clean your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly. Do not share your towel with anyone else in the household. You can also use hand sanitiser (containing at least 60 percent alcohol) if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. If using hand sanitiser, cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. The same hand hygiene should apply to all household members.

For more detailed instructions see the Cleaning your hands learning module at [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=400](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=400)

## Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, your sleeve or elbow when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a rubbish bin and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly, or use hand sanitiser.

## Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, pillows or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them in the dishwasher or washing machine or use soap/detergent and water to wash them thoroughly.

## Keep your home or accommodation clean and well-ventilated

- Overall, the home or accommodation you're staying in should be clean and well-ventilated, especially the areas shared with other people. Use household gloves when cleaning. You or your carers should:
- clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as bedside tables, bedframes, door handles and other bedroom furniture daily with an antiseptic wipe or regular household disinfectant, including bleach solutions
- clean and disinfect bathroom and toilet surfaces at least once daily with regular household disinfectant
- clean the patient's clothes, bedclothes, bath and hand towels etc. separately from other household items:
  - use regular laundry soap and water or a washing machine with common household detergent (laundry powder or liquid) and dry thoroughly outside or in a dryer
  - do not shake soiled laundry
  - avoid direct contact of the skin and clothes with the dirty items
  - wear gloves when handling dirty linen
  - always clean your hands after handling dirty linen, whether gloves were worn or not.

## Seek prompt medical attention if your illness worsens

Seek prompt medical attention if you are feeling worse (eg, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing). Follow the instruction you have received from your public health unit, health care provider or hospital.

Before seeking care, always call your health care provider or ambulance service and tell them that you have or are being investigated for COVID-19. Clean your hands with hand sanitiser and put on a face mask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the health care provider or ambulance service keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

## Learning modules

The Ministry of Health has worked with Careerforce to create five learning modules with useful advice on how to halt the spread of COVID-19.

The following five modules are available on the Ministry of Health's LearnOnline website:

- Cleaning your hands – [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=403](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=403)
- Stop the spread of COVID-19 – [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=404](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=404)
- Caring for a person with COVID-19 at home – [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=405](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=405)
- Helping others with their personal care needs – [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=406](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=406)
- Working as a caregiver in your home – [learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=407](https://learnonline.health.nz/course/view.php?id=407)

## More information

For the latest health advice, information and resources, visit the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 webpage [health.govt.nz/covid-19](https://health.govt.nz/covid-19) or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453, it is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.