



# COVID-19 Clinics

## Frequently asked questions

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms include shortness of breath or cough, with or without a fever. In some cases, the virus can cause severe pneumonia. From what we know now about COVID-19, the symptoms can start between 2 and 14 days from exposure to the virus.

### **Should I be tested if I don't have symptoms?**

No. There is no reason to be tested for COVID-19 if you do not have symptoms.

People will only be tested if they have fever and/or respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath, cough or sore throat AND documented evidence of:

- overseas travel in the last 14 days (provide boarding pass or flight booking or airline bag tag with name and date of travel) OR
- close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case (provide name of case)

### **Why won't I get tested if I don't have symptoms?**

In the early stages of infection (before people have symptoms), it may not be possible to detect the virus. Testing when you do not have symptoms could give a false negative result.

### **When will I be notified of my test results?**

It will take between 2 and 3 days to be notified of your test results.

### **What should I do if I feel worse while I am waiting for my test results?**

If your symptoms get worse while you are waiting for your results attend your nearest Emergency Department. Call the Emergency Department ahead of your arrival or tell the 000 operator you have been tested and are waiting for your results. Do not attend the Emergency Department to find out your results.

### **What happens if I get a positive text for COVID-19?**

A Public Health Unit staff member will discuss your positive result with you. You will need to remain in self-quarantine until the Public Health Unit has confirmed you are no longer contagious. You may be asked to spend time in hospital while you recover.

### **What happens if I get a negative test for COVID-19?**

If you provided an Australian mobile phone number at the COVID clinic where you were tested, your negative test result will be provided to you by text message (SMS). COVID clinics will contact the parents/guardians/carers of children under the age of 16 who were tested at COVID clinics to provide negative test results.

## If my test is negative do I need to remain in self-quarantine?

If you have returned from international travel after 12:00am 16 March (AEST) you must self-quarantine until 14 days after your date of return to Australia, even if you have a negative test during that time.

**If you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19**, you must continue to self-quarantine until 14 days after last contact with that person. The definition of 'close contact' includes those people who have been face-to-face with a person infected with the virus for at least 15 minutes or been in the same closed space for at least 2 hours with an infected person

## Can COVID-19 be transmitted from person to person?

Yes, COVID-19 can be spread from person to person. The virus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- direct close contact with a person while they are infectious
- close contact with a person with a confirmed infection who coughs or sneezes, or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

Most infections are only transmitted by people when they have symptoms. Spread of this virus from person to person is usually between close contacts.

## What do I do if I have travelled overseas?

If you have returned from international travel after 12:00am 16 March you must self-isolate for 14 days after the date of return to Australia.

## What do I do if I have been in contact with someone who has travelled overseas?

If you have had close contact (see definition above) with a returned traveller who recently travelled overseas, you do not need to self-quarantine. **HOWEVER** – if they are suspected of being infected and are waiting on test results, then you may need to self-quarantine – even if you don't have any symptoms, until the test results are available. This will be determined by the Public Health Unit on a case-by-case basis. If you become unwell with COVID-19 symptoms you should contact your local Public Health Unit who will assess and advise on what to do next.

## What is the treatment for COVID-19?

There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 but the symptoms can be treated. In most cases, symptoms will resolve on their own.

## Is there a vaccine?

There are currently no available vaccines for COVID-19.

## How can I protect myself and my family?

The best way to protect yourself and others is to practise good hygiene by:

- frequently washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based hand gel
- covering your cough or sneeze with a tissue or flexed elbow
- avoiding close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms.

## **I am caring for someone who has (or could have) COVID-19; how can I protect myself?**

Anyone in the home with a respiratory illness should be cared for in a single room, where practicable. Isolating sick people in single rooms reduces the risk of transmission to others. Follow the below steps to reduce chances of spreading infections at home:

- frequently wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or flexed elbow
- avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms.

If it is not possible to keep the potentially infected person in a room by themselves, try to follow these principles to reduce chances of disease spread:

- as a priority, place people with excessive cough and phlegm in single rooms
- if there is more than one person with the same symptoms, they can be placed together in the same room
- importantly, ensure that people sharing a room are physically separated (more than 1.5 metre or arm's length) from each other.

## **Do I need to wear a mask?**

Surgical masks are only helpful in preventing people who have COVID-19 from spreading it to others. If you are well, you do not need to wear a surgical mask.

If you are required to self-quarantine, you should use a surgical mask (if you have one) in the following circumstances:

- if you need to leave your home for any reason and will be in public areas
- if you are visiting a medical facility
- if you have symptoms and other people are present in the same room as you.

Further information about COVID-19 and self-quarantine is available on the Department of Health's website: [www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus)

If you need help with translating the information on these sites, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (external site) or phone 131 450.

**This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.**

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