

# Release and recovery from COVID-19



Self-isolating for at least 7 days is the most important thing to do to prevent transmission to others.

Most people with COVID-19 get better within a few weeks but some people may have symptoms that last much longer.

Vaccination is strongly recommended to protect you from getting COVID-19 again. There is no need to delay vaccination once you have fully recovered from COVID-19. Talk to your doctor about what is best for you.

## How will I know when I can leave self-isolation?

You must self-isolate for 7 days from the day you tested positive for COVID-19 by PCR. You can only leave self-isolation after 7 days if you do not have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath. If you tested positive by Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) it is strongly recommended that you also follow this advice.

If you received an SMS from NSW Health when you tested positive, you will receive another SMS after 7 days. You do not have to wait for this second SMS to leave self-isolation if it has been 7 days since you were tested.

If you have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath in the 24 hours before your 7 days is finished, please call the NSW Care at Home Support Line on 1800 960 933 for further advice. If you are under the care of a clinical team, your team will tell you when you will be released from isolation.

Please also continue to follow the [rules and restrictions](#) that are in place where you live once you finish isolating.

## Am I likely to have any long term effects from COVID-19?

Please make some time to follow-up with your regular doctor after you leave self-isolation.

Most people who have COVID-19 recover completely within a few weeks. This is not the same for everyone. Symptoms that are more likely to last beyond a few weeks include:

- feeling tired (fatigue)
- chest discomfort
- cough.

Other physical symptoms can also continue beyond a few weeks. These include problems with sense of smell or taste, headache, runny nose, joint or muscle pain, trouble sleeping or eating, sweating, and diarrhoea.

Some people have ongoing psychological symptoms too. These might include:

- trouble thinking clearly, focusing, or remembering
- depression, anxiety, or a related condition called post-traumatic stress disorder ("PTSD")

It is hard for doctors to predict when symptoms will improve, since this is different for different people. Your recovery will depend on your age, your overall health, and how severe your COVID-19 symptoms are. Some symptoms, like fatigue, might continue even while others improve or go away. You should discuss ongoing or worsening symptoms with your doctor.

## Do I still need to get tested for COVID-19 after I have been released from self-isolation?

If it has been more than one month since you recovered from COVID-19 you should get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms because your immunity may have decreased. Unfortunately, people can become unwell with COVID-19 more than once. Call your GP about your symptoms – they may order other tests to check for other illnesses.

## How soon should I get vaccinated?

If you have not already been vaccinated, you can now receive your COVID-19 vaccination. **There is no need to delay vaccination if you have fully recovered.**

If you have already had your first COVID-19 vaccine before you were infected, please wait until you have recovered from your illness before you have your second dose.

Please talk to your doctor if you are unsure about when it is best for you to get vaccinated.

Public health orders require some people to be vaccinated. You can get a temporary medical exemption to COVID-19 vaccination from your GP if needed.

If your medical clearance notice indicates that you have a temporary exemption from vaccination, **this exemption is valid in NSW only**. If you need to be vaccinated for employment, schooling, or other activities in another jurisdiction, please check the rules that apply in that state or territory.

## What if I am exposed to someone with COVID-19 again?

People who have recovered from COVID-19 have a low risk of getting it again in the month after infection as most people develop some immunity (ability to fight the disease).

If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 within one month following your infection, you will generally not need to self-isolate or get a test unless you have symptoms. If you come into contact with someone with COVID-19 more than 1 month after you are released, you will need to self-isolate, test and follow the advice in the [Information for people exposed to COVID-19](#) and [Get tested for COVID-19](#) fact sheets.

However, if you have been released from isolation before other positive cases in your household, you will not need to self-isolate or test unless you develop new COVID-19 symptoms.

## Mental health support

We understand that this may have been a challenging time for you and want to ensure that you have access to support throughout your recovery.

NSW Health has partnered with Sonder to provide a personal wellbeing service, available to help support you. The app provides access to 24/7 multilingual chat and phone access to a range of mental health, medical and wellbeing support services. You can [download the Sonder app](#) for free. You may also receive a text message from Sonder notifying you that you have free access to the app through NSW Health. Downloading the app is optional and Sonder do not retain or use your data for any other purpose than notifying you of this service.

Other support services you can access include:

- NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511
- Beyond Blue helpline – 1800 512 348
- Lifeline – 13 11 14
- Services NSW [mental wellbeing resources](#)
- Kids Helpline – 1800 55 1800.

## When can I return to normal activities?

You can return to your normal activities 7 days after you were tested if you do not have a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath.

A person who has had COVID-19 is at most risk of passing the infection on to others during the first 7 days of their illness. However, you may still be infectious for a short time after this, so it is important that you continue to take measures to protect those around you for several more days. Please continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask in line with current recommendations and requirements, and regularly wash your

hands. Please do not enter high risk settings (healthcare, aged care, disability care or correctional facilities) unless for personal care for at least 3 days after you have been released from isolation. In special circumstances, some people can return to essential service work after 7 days, provided extra precautions are taken and a management plan has been developed by your employer.

## **Further information**

If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to your local doctor. You can also call NSW Health on 1800 943 553

We encourage you to visit the [NSW Health website](#) for the latest and most up to date information regarding COVID-19.