



Advice for patients agreeing to home isolation while waiting for COVID-19 test results

Advice sheet

Home isolation

Your local health protection team and your doctor have agreed that you may stay at home while you wait for the results of your tests for novel coronavirus infection. This is because you do not need to be admitted to hospital and because you have agreed to follow the important instructions described below.

If you are not the patient but have agreed to support the patient with home isolation, then you must also agree to support the patient in following these instructions:

1. Stay at home

You should remain in your own home, except for getting medical care (see points 3 and 8 before getting medical care). Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transport or taxis until you have been told that is safe to do so. You will need to ask for help if you require groceries, other shopping or medications.

2. Separate yourself from other people in your home

You should stay in a well-ventilated room e.g. with a window that can be opened to the outside and separate from other people in your home. Ensure that shared spaces (kitchen, bathroom) are well ventilated.

You should also use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household, if available. If you cannot have your own dedicated toilet and/or bathroom, regular cleaning will be required. See 'Toilet and bathing' (point 6), below for further advice.

3. Wear a surgical facemask if advised

If you have been provided with surgical facemasks, then you should wear this when you are in the same room with other people. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

4. Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a disposable tissue when you cough or sneeze. Dispose of tissues into a plastic waste bag (see point 8 for managing waste/rubbish), and immediately wash your hands with soap and water.

5. Wash your hands frequently

Wash your hands and advise those in your household to wash hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

6. Toileting and bathing

If possible you should use your own toilet and bathroom. If you do not have your own toilet and bathroom, regular cleaning of a shared toilet and/or bathroom will be required (see below), ideally after each time the toilet and/or bathroom has been used by the person who is isolated.

7. Household items

All dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, should be cleaned in a dishwasher, if possible, or hot soapy water, after each use.

Do not share clothing, towels, etc. Wash all laundry (clothing, linen, bedding and towels) at the highest temperature for the fabric using laundry detergent. This should be above 60°C. If possible, tumble dry and iron using a hot setting/steam iron. Do not take laundry to a laundrette. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling dirty laundry.

8. Household cleaning

Clean all surfaces, such as counters, table-tops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets and toilet handles, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day with a household cleaner that is active against viruses and bacteria. Follow the instructions on the product label and check they can be used on the surface being cleaned. Wash hands with soap and water after cleaning surfaces and handling clothing and bedding.

9. Waste

All waste you generate, including used tissues, and surgical facemasks if used, should be put into a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full. The plastic bag should then be placed into a second bin bag and tied. Do not dispose of it or put it out for collection until have been informed that you do not have novel coronavirus. If you test positive, you will be instructed on waste disposal.

10. Do not have visitors in your home

Only those who live in your home should be allowed to stay. Do not invite or allow visitors (such as friends and extended family) to enter. If you think there is an essential need for someone to visit, then discuss it with your named medical contact first.

11. Medical appointments

Do not attend any medical appointments without first discussing with your named medical contact on the number provided to you.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness worsens, for example, if you have difficulty breathing; you should call your named medical contact using the phone number given to you. If it is an emergency, and you need to call an ambulance, inform the call handler/operator that you have been tested for novel coronavirus and are awaiting results.