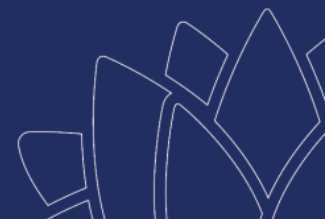


NSW Health Household and Close Contact Guidelines



Who do these Guidelines apply to?

These Guidelines apply to household contacts (someone who lives with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19) and close contacts (someone who has been formally notified by NSW Health that they are a close contact). If you are not a household or close contact, but have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please refer to the [Information for people exposed to COVID-19 factsheet](#).

If you have had confirmed COVID-19 in the last 12 weeks, you do not have to comply with these Guidelines if you become a household or close contact.

You do not have to comply with the requirements below if you have not been in contact with the person who tested positive to COVID-19 while they were infectious. People are infectious from either 48 hours before they have symptoms, or if they do not have symptoms, from 48 hours before they test positive. You may have had no contact because you were away from home, or you were effectively isolating from them (e.g. they live in a granny flat or other separate area of your home).

What do I have to do?

If you do not have any symptoms, you do not need to self-isolate, but you should be aware that you are at increased risk of COVID-19 and need to take steps to protect people around you. You must follow these Guidelines for 7 days from the last time someone in your household tested positive for COVID-19, or as otherwise directed by NSW Health if you are a close contact.

- If you have or develop symptoms, you must self-isolate and get tested for COVID-19. If your test result is positive, you must follow the [testing positive to COVID-19 and managing COVID-19 safely at home](#) advice. If your test result is negative, stay home until you do not have any symptoms.
- Do not visit high-risk settings (healthcare, aged care, disability care or correctional facilities) unless you require care yourself, or there are exceptional circumstances and you have obtained the permission of the facility to visit (e.g. end of life visits).
- Work or study from home where practicable. You must seek approval from your employer or education facility before returning to work or school if you cannot work or study from home. Your employer will undertake a risk assessment before you can return to the workplace or education setting.
- If you are over 12 years of age you must wear a mask when you are in an indoor setting that is not your own home, including workplaces and tertiary education settings. School settings may have their own guidance for students which should be followed. You may remove your mask in circumstances as set out in Clause 7 of the [Public Health \(COVID-19 General\) Order 2022](#) (for example, if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability that makes wearing a mask unsuitable, or if you are eating or drinking). A summary of these reasons can be found [here](#).
- Masks are also encouraged in your home to reduce the risk of transmission in your household.
- Avoid contact with people at high risk of severe illness, where possible.
- Avoid large or crowded indoor gatherings where you will be in contact with groups of people that you don't live with, where possible.
- Where practicable, undertake a rapid antigen test if you need to attend an indoor gathering with people you don't live with, including your workplace or school, even if you do not have symptoms.

Why is this important?

Households are one of the highest risk settings for spreading COVID-19. After being exposed to someone with COVID-19 you are at risk of illness for 14 days. Most people who develop COVID-19 will get symptoms in the first 7 days, however some people will develop symptoms between day 7 and 14.

While you are legally required to follow these Guidelines for 7 days, it is recommended that you continue to monitor for symptoms and take precautions for 14 days to help protect yourself and others from COVID-19. This is particularly important if you or someone you know is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Can I go to work or school?

Where practicable, you should work or study from home to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

While you do not have to self-isolate, you may only return to work or school after you have notified your workplace or education facility that you are a household contact or a close contact. Your employer or educational facility must approve your return to work/school and may ask you to take additional precautions to reduce the risk of transmission.

You must wear a mask when you are in an indoor setting that is not your own home, including workplaces and tertiary education settings. Please follow the guidance for schools and early childhood education settings.

Before you return to work or school it is strongly recommended that you have a COVID-19 test. This is particularly important if you work in healthcare, aged care, disability care and correctional facilities.

If you are not employed by a high-risk setting, but sometimes go to them for work (e.g. occasional contracted service provider), you should consider if it is critical before you attend, and gain permission from the facility before entering. This does not include emergency services.

NSW Health workers should refer to [Managing healthcare worker exposures](#) for additional information. Workers in residential aged care and disability care settings must refer to the [Advice to Residential Aged Care Facilities](#) and [Advice to Residential Disability Care Facilities](#) respectively.

How can I protect people at high risk of COVID-19?

As a household contact you are at high risk of developing COVID-19 for at least 14 days since the person in your house tested positive to COVID-19. You should carefully think about the risk that you could infect vulnerable people.

All household contacts **must not visit high risk settings** (aged care, healthcare, disability care and correctional facilities) for at least 7 days after the last person in their house had a positive COVID-19 test. If there are extenuating compassionate reasons for visiting a high-risk setting (e.g. end of life) and you do not have symptoms of COVID-19, you should contact the facility to discuss if this can be safely arranged. Between day 7 and 14, you should limit visiting high risk settings to further reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

These restrictions do not apply to household or close contacts who require medical care, aged care or disability care services for themselves. Where possible, call ahead to notify the facility that you are a household contact or a close contact so that they can manage the risk to staff, patients, residents and clients.

Wherever possible, avoid contact with people at higher risk of severe illness as listed below. Where contact is unavoidable, take extra precautions like wearing a mask, doing a rapid antigen test before visiting, and holding the visit in an outdoor or well-ventilated area.

Who is at higher risk of severe illness?

- People aged 60 years and older
- Pregnant women
- Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander people (from age 35 years and over)
- People with obesity, diabetes, serious cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease (including severe asthma requiring hospitalisation the last 12 months), severe chronic liver or kidney disease, active cancer or who are immunocompromised
- Some people with a disability including those with a disability that affects their lungs, heart or immune system
- Residents of aged care and disability care facilities
- People aged 18 years and older who are unvaccinated

For more information please see:

- [What COVID-19 test should I do?](#)
- [NSW Health COVID-19 Self-Isolation Guideline](#)

Penalties

It is an offence to not comply with a Public Health Order. Penalties can apply to individuals and corporations. Additional on the spot fines can also apply.

Help in your language

If you need an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National on 131 450, This service is free and confidential.