

Self-Isolation

Information Sheet

Why am I being asked to self-isolate?

Self-isolation can help prevent the spread of infections, such as novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV).

When you are exposed to an illness, there is a time between the exposure and when you start to feel sick. This is known as the incubation period (usually 2 to 10 days for 2019-nCoV, and up to a maximum of 14 days).

There is a very small chance that you can spread the germs during this time (the few days before a feeling of sickness starts).

More importantly, staying home means that if you do start to feel sick, you won't run the risk of this happening while you are in a public place. Self-isolation is a cautious action used to lower the chance that the virus could spread to others.

It is important to remember that not everyone who is exposed will get sick, and anyone who feels well for the full 14 days after an exposure of concern is not considered to be infectious.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means avoiding situations where you could infect other people.

This means all situations where you may come in contact with others, such as social gatherings, work, school/university, child care, athletic events, faith-based gatherings, healthcare facilities, grocery stores, restaurants, shopping malls, and any public gatherings.

You should, (where possible) not use public transportation including buses, taxis, or ride sharing.

As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people and avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food or other things you may need.

You can also use delivery or pick up services for errands such as grocery shopping.

If you need to leave your home for an urgent errand, such as picking up essential medication, as a precaution to further reduce risk of spread, you can wear a surgical mask while you are out.

What else can I do to stop the spread of infection?

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds making sure you dry them thoroughly, or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.

Avoid sharing 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 thoroughly with soap and water, place in the dishwasher for cleaning, or wash in the washing machine. Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched and shared surfaces such as doorknobs, counters.

Getting food and medicine

Where possible, contact a friend, family member, or delivery services to carry out errands like supermarket shopping on your behalf.

For more information on self-isolation call [Health Link 811](tel:811).