

Information for patients

You have been assessed as being generally well and do not require hospital admission.

You have been admitted to the COVID 19 Virtual Ward for care and isolation at home.

Looking after yourself

Ask yourself these questions in the morning, afternoon, and night.

Can I...

- get my own food?
- get my own drink?
- go to the toilet normally?
- take my regular medication?

If you are having trouble doing any of these things, **call the COVID Virtual Ward on 5687 0991.**

How do I feel when I stand up and walk around?

If you have trouble breathing, feel dizzy or lightheaded or have chest pain, **call the COVID Virtual Ward on 5687 0991.**

Resources

If you are feeling anxious or worried, there are lots of resources available through the Australian Government Head to Health COVID-19 support page:

headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19

More information

For the latest advice, information, and resources, download the official government "Coronavirus Australia" app in the Apple App Store or Google Play, or join our WhatsApp channel on iOS or Android.

The Community Recovery Hotline 1800 173 349 is open 24 hours, 7 days for individuals who have no other means of support and Queenslanders in self-quarantine.



IMPORTANT

If you need immediate medical attention call 000 for Queensland Ambulance Service, please notify them that you are COVID-19 positive in home isolation.

If you are concerned about any change or worsening of symptoms at home, please phone 5687 0991 during hours of 8am-4.30pm. A clinician will determine if you need transfer to hospital for further care.

If you need assistance outside of these hours, please call 13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84) 24 hours, seven days a week.

Interpreter services



Gold Coast Health provides interpreter services for patients attending the hospital who are from non-English speaking backgrounds. If you require the assistance of an interpreter, please indicate this on your registration form and advise the hospital prior to any medical appointments.

Interpreter services are provided free-of-charge to all patients who require the service, including non-Medicare patients. Call 13 14 50.

What do I need to do?

- To ensure we can provide the best care and timely communication, please tell us about your access to phone, SMS, email, (including having enough data) and your preferred method of contact.
- We will also obtain consent to receive information and notifications via SMS/email.
- Provide correct emergency contact details to Virtual Ward staff
- Please answer phone calls from the Virtual Ward- these may be displayed as 'Private Number'.
- Maintain self – isolation at all times.

How will my symptoms be monitored?

- Clinical staff will contact you to assess your current symptoms and provide recommendations for management.
- They will enquire about your current symptoms and any other concerns you may have.
- Frequency and mode of communication may vary throughout your journey as a Virtual Ward patient and will depend on your symptoms and personal circumstances.
- Please look out for any new symptoms and let us know each time we call. Symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, phlegm, headache, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, or muscle pain.
- It is expected you will have a temperature with COVID-19. Refer to the Home Monitoring Instructions on page 4 for further information. Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be administered to reduce COVID-19 symptoms and temperatures over 38 degrees (please take medication as directed).

How long will I stay in isolation at home?

- The isolation period will be 7 days from the date of the positive test (depending on symptoms).
- All patients, regardless of symptoms will be discharged into the care of their GP by day 10.
- You will be sent a text message with a link to the Queensland Government website regarding isolation.
- You will stay in isolation until you are considered no longer infectious. Please review the government guidelines regarding self- release from isolation (see the section *Release from isolation*):
www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/public-health-directions/confirmed-cases-and-close-contacts/isolation-covid19-diagnosed-case
- The Gold Coast Health Virtual Ward will not send patients letters, if you require a medical certificate please contact your general practitioner.

Self-care during isolation at home

Being in isolation can be stressful. Some suggestions to reduce stress and boredom include:

- Follow the 'Looking after yourself' guidelines on page 1.
- It is recommended you find a support person to contact you via phone twice a day during your time in isolation.
- Keep in touch with family members and friends via virtual calls, telephone, email or social media.
- First Nations link to support resources: www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/information-for/first-nations/first-nations-people
- Reassure young children using age-appropriate language.
- Where possible, keep up normal daily routines, such as eating and exercise.
- Do things that help you relax and use isolation as an opportunity to do activities you don't usually have time for.
- Talk with your Virtual call nurse if you are having difficulty in isolation.

What do you do if you are told to come to hospital?

If you become unwell, or have concerns in isolation requiring hospital admission, you may need to go to Gold Coast University Hospital for admission.

The Virtual Ward doctor or nurse will discuss this with you and decide on the best path into the hospital.

If this involves a loved one dropping you off:

- Sit in the backseat of the car with a mask on; driver must also wear a mask.
- Drop off is at:

Emergency Department
Hollows Way
Gold Coast University Hospital
Southport

Please do not enter via the emergency department. Remain in your car.

- Call 5687 7450 just prior to arrival so that the staff can be prepared to pick you up.
- Wait in your car for the transfer staff to assist you to the ward.
- If you are asked to come to hospital, bring your regular medications, warm clothes, devices with charger (e.g. ipad and mobile phone) and any activities to occupy your time (that can fit into one small bag).

Frequently asked questions

Who needs to wear a mask inside my home?

- You do not need to wear a mask inside your home if you are the only person in your home or other people in the home also have COVID-19.
- Others in the home who do not have COVID-19 should try to wear a mask where possible.
- You will need to wear a mask if you're isolating in a home with other people and you cannot avoid complete contact. This includes outside common areas when you are not alone.
- If you have to leave your home for urgent medical care you should always wear a mask.

Where can I go during my isolation?

- Being isolated at home means that you need to stay at home. You cannot leave to attend public places including work, school, childcare, university or public gatherings.
- If you live in a private house, it is safe for you to go into your garden or courtyard.
- You cannot go shopping. Ask friends or family in other households to get food and necessities for you. Advise them to leave the food items at the front door. If you order your groceries online, inform the supermarket that you are in isolation and unable to sign for deliveries in the instruction box and to leave the delivery at front door.
- You cannot accept visitors in your home.
- You can leave your home only for emergency medical care.

What advice can I give to others living with me?

- Others that live with you who have COVID-19 can stay with you.
- The recommendation of the Gold Coast Public Health Unit is that those who do not have COVID-19 should, wherever possible, seek alternative living arrangements until you have been deemed non-infectious. This will have been discussed with the Gold Coast Public Health team on your initial phone call.
- Contacts in your home who do not have COVID-19 will be in quarantine and cannot leave the home unless they require a COVID-19 test or urgent medical care. They will also be required to quarantine for another 14 days after your child or any other household members has been deemed non-infectious.

How can I prevent the spread of COVID-19?

COVID-19 is spread through person-to-person contact like other cold and flu illnesses. The best way to protect everyone against COVID-19 is to wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser frequently and properly.

You all should:

- wash hands frequently with soap and water, including before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash hands
- avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people)
- wear a mask where possible
- wash surfaces that are frequently touched such as door handles, light switches, kitchen and bathroom areas. Clean with household detergent or disinfectant.

Can I have a COVID vaccine when I am COVID positive?

- Due to the isolation requirements when COVID positive, you will not be able to have your vaccination while infected. It is recommended that you have your vaccine, whether it is first or second dose, after you are symptom free from COVID 19, or as recommended by your GP.

Should I be vaccinated if I have had COVID-19?

- Yes. The immunity people get from being vaccinated, even after the natural infection, is stronger than immunity from infection. Getting vaccinated even if you have had COVID-19 means you are more likely to be protected longer.

Can any of my other household members who are not COVID-19 positive have a COVID vaccine whilst I am in isolation?

- No. Other household members will be in quarantine during your isolation period and are unable to leave the home for vaccine.

Strategies to cope with social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine

Going into a period of social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine may feel overwhelming, and can contribute to feelings of helplessness and fear.

These strategies may help with overcoming overwhelming feelings.

Perspective: Try to see this time as unique and different, not necessarily bad, even if it is something you didn't choose.

Connection: Think of creative ways to stay connected with others, including social media, email and phone.

Be generous to others: Giving to others in times of need not only helps the recipient, it enhances your wellbeing too. Is there a way to help others around you?

Stay connected with your values: Don't let fear or anxiety drive your interactions with others.

Daily routine: Create a routine that prioritises things you enjoy and you have been meaning to do, but haven't had time for. Read a book, watch a show, take up a new hobby.








Limit your exposure to news and media: Choose specific times of day when you will get updates, and ensure they are from reputable sources.

(COVID-19) specific support






Visit the Queensland Government site for community recovery and support services:

www.qld.gov.au/community/disasters-emergencies/covid-19/support-communities/covid-19






Wellbeing support

Lifeline. 24 hours, 7 days	 13 11 14
Lifeline Chat Online 7pm – midnight, 7 nights	 lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat
Kids Helpline 24 hours, 7 days	 1800 55 1800  kidshelpline.com.au
Beyond Blue. 24 hours, 7 days	 1300 22 4636
Beyond Blue Chat Online 3pm – midnight, 7 days	 beyondblue.org.au
Red Cross. Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm	 1800 733 276










Domestic and family violence services

DV Helpline	 1800 811 811
Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast	 07 5591 4222
Womensline	 1800 811 811
Mensline	 1800 600 636
1800Respect	 1800 737 732





Health support

After Hours Medical Help and Advice. 24 hours, 7 days	 13 43 25 84 (13 HEALTH)
Serving Our People. 7pm – midnight, 7 nights Delivery service for people suffering genuine hardship.	 0478 181 818  www.sop.org.au
St Johns Crisis Centre Welfare hotline	 0402 117 770
Havafeed Community Centre. Free meals, free food parcels & showers	 1300 22 4636  havafeed.org

Cultural support




Kalwun Health	 Miami: 07 55261112 Bilinga: 07 55896500 Oxenford: 07 5514 7100  www.kalwun.com.au
Bugalwena Tweed Heads	 07 5513 1200  bnmac.com.au/clinics
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health	www.iuih.org.au
Primary Health Network	 0439 908 281  gcphn.org.au
Krurungal Supports	 07 5536 7911  krurungal.com.au
Multicultural Communities Council Gold Coast	 www.mccgc.com.au

Tenant support







Tenants Queensland	 1300 744 263  tenantsqld.org.au
Residential Tenancies Authority	 132 468  www.rta.qld.gov.au/renting/covid19-changes

Income support

Support may depend on individual circumstances. Centrelink information is available via www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/affected-coronavirus-covid-19, or by calling 1300 1MYGOV (1300 169 468).

Centrelink Job Seeker line 8am – 8pm Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm local time Sat - Sun	 132 850
Australian Government, Services Australia. 7pm – midnight.	 132 468  servicesaustralia.gov.au

Additional resources

Your mental wellbeing	 mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au
Australian Psychology Society	 psychology.org.au/covid-19-australians
Red Cross	 www.redcross.org.au/stories/covid-19/covid-19-wellbeing
Australian Department of Health	 health.gov.au/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19
World Health Organisation	 www.who.int
Smart Traveller	 smartraveller.gov.au/COVID-19