

What you need to know about self isolation

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There's been a lot of talk in the media lately about self-isolation and the coronavirus, but what does this term actually mean for you and your family?

Who needs to self-isolate?

From midnight March 15th 2020, the Australian Government has ordered that people who have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus (as well as those returning from overseas) should self-isolate in either their own homes or hotel rooms. This self-isolation should last for 14 days, which is the amount of time it usually takes for symptoms of the coronavirus to appear.

What does self-isolation really mean?

Self-isolation means that you must stay in one residence and not go to public places such as work, school, childcare, university or public gatherings. Only the people who usually live with you at home should be allowed in the house. Avoid inviting or entertaining visitors to your home and if you are in a hotel, try to avoid having contact with staff or guests.

Going outside

The Department of Health has indicated that if you live in a private house, then it is safe for you to spend time in your garden or courtyard. If you live in an apartment block, or are staying in a hotel, it is okay to go into the garden, but you should wear a surgical mask, and try to move through shared public areas as quickly as possible.

How do I manage 14 days of isolation?

Being in isolation can be stressful, upsetting and boring. Try to remember that you will only need to self-isolate for 14 days and it is for the good of the whole community. Perhaps the best way to think about self-isolation is that it doesn't mean that you can't communicate with other people. In fact, staying in (non-physical) contact with people is important. Here are some suggestions:

- Talk to others on the phone, email or social media
- Try to develop some daily routines – especially around eating and exercise
- Do things that help you to relax
- Talk to school age children about the situation in terms that they can understand
- Use the 14 days as an opportunity to do activities that you don't usually have time for

Is self-isolation the same as social distancing (now referred to as physical distancing)?

No. These are different things. While self-isolation requires you to stay home, social distancing simply means not getting too close to other people when you are going about your daily activities. For example, if you do not need to self-isolate at home, you may go to school, university or work, however you need to reduce the spread of germs. This can be done by:

- Stop handshaking as a greeting
- Hold meetings over the phone or as a video conference
- Put off large meetings that need everyone in the room
- Try to stay at least 1.5 meters from other people
- Wash your hands with soap, and use hand sanitiser as much as possible.



Your Mental Health

While physical distancing and self-isolation can help protect our physical health, we also need to consider our mental health.

Feelings such as boredom, frustration, anxiety and even post-traumatic stress disorder can all be triggered by this sudden and widespread change in our environment.

To help support the mental health and well-being of our community, dpv health's counselling, psychology and social work team will be making phone based therapy sessions available during this difficult time.

Should you or your family need personal support and wish to speak with a counsellor, please call [1300 234 263](tel:1300234263) to arrange a phone based appointment.

DPV Health