Preparing for COVID in the WA community

There are many things we can all do now that can help make a big difference in the future to prepare for COVID in the community.

Support person

Arrange for a family member or friend to be your support person, should you get COVID. Ask them to call you twice a day at agreed times so they know you are okay.

This support person will help keep you safe.

If they cannot contact you at the agreed times, tell your support person to check on you at your home. If they cannot raise you, they should then call 000.

Home essentials

If you do not have these essentials, discuss your options with your support person.

1. Face masks, hand sanitiser and gloves
2. Pain relief medication and electrolytes (available from your pharmacy)
3. Your regular medications
4. Thermometer
5. Pulse Oximeter (optional) to measure oxygen levels in your blood and heart rate, which can indicate the severity of infection
6. Should you need to go to hospital, you will need a plan to look after your children, pets, or people in your care
7. How you will get food delivered? Will it be through a supermarket or can your support person help?
8. Ensure you have the phone numbers for people you can call if you need help
9. Make sure you have activities to keep you entertained

Over-the-counter treatments for COVID-19

There is no approved treatment for mild cases of COVID-19 and, in most cases, symptoms will resolve on their own.

Pain-relieving medication or cold and flu tablets may help reduce some symptoms. Be mindful of not exceeding the recommended dosages of these products.

Most importantly, drink lots of water, take electrolytes (available from your pharmacy) and sleep when you feel like it.

Is every eligible person in my household vaccinated?

Anyone over the age of 5 years can now be vaccinated for COVID-19.

Evidence from around the world shows that vaccination is the best defence against the disease – three doses is even better.

Book today.

COVID-19 symptoms - what to expect

Watch for the symptoms.

COVID-19 **Omicron variant** symptoms are usually mild in someone who has had two or three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. There are eight warning signs, which are most likely to appear in the first few days of the disease, but they can take longer.

These include:

> Scratchy throat

> Runny nose/congestion

> Headache

> Sneezing

> Fatigue

> Lower back pain

> Body aches

> Night sweats

The COVID-19 Delta variant is less transmissible than the Omicron variant, but its effects can be more serious.

Most people will have mild COVID-19 symptoms for up to 2 weeks. People should generally avoid high-impact activities, weights, running and workouts.

Early symptoms of COVID-19 vary widely. It can start with a ticklish throat, a cough, fever or headache. You may also feel short of breath, a little pressure in your chest, you may feel tired and/or lose your sense of smell and taste. Diarrhoea is also common.

From days 4–6, your condition may worsen with aches, chills, cough and an inability to get comfortable.

Younger people may develop rashes, swelling or blistering on your toes or fingers.

Generally, days 7–8 is when people either start to get better or their condition deteriorates significantly.

If you start to feel worse, contact your healthcare practitioner.

From day 9 onwards, continue to monitor your symptoms.

Generally, you should improve significantly. If you start to feel worse, contact your healthcare practitioner.

If you experience shortness of breath at rest or difficulty breathing, or if your symptoms become suddenly worse, you should call 000.

Tell the ambulance staff you are COVID-19 positive. If you feel your symptoms become worse, but are not life-threatening, contact your GP or go to a hospital emergency department.

Practise good hygiene

> Wash your hands often and for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water or an alcohol-based sanitiser.

> Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your inner elbow. Immediately throw the tissue in the bin.

> Stay home if you're sick. Do not go to work or school.

> Clean surfaces and objects such as doorknobs, benches, tabletops, keyboards and phones regularly.

Wear a face mask

Under certain circumstances, wearing a mask may be mandatory in WA.

It is important to follow the most current advice on the requirements for wearing a face mask. It is also good practice to wear a mask when you can't physically distance, even if it is not mandated.

WA Health recommends wearing single use surgical face masks or fitted reusable fabric masks. Bandanas or scarves should not be used as a face mask substitute.

Keep your distance

To help reduce the transmission of COVID-19, you are encouraged reduce the number of close physical and social contacts you have with other people.

Steps for physical distancing in public includes:

> minimising all unnecessary contact with others

> keeping at least 1.5 metres away from others

> avoiding physical greetings such as handshaking, hugs and kisses

> using tap and pay instead of handling cash

For more information about how to practise physical distancing at home, work, school or keeping in touch with others, visit the Australian Government Department of Health website.

Last reviewed: 07-01-2022

See also

> COVID-19 (coronavirus)

> COVID-19 testing

> COVID-19 vaccine

> Locations visited by confirmed COVID-19 cases

> Face masks

> COVID testing clinics

Related sites

> Roll up for WA (external site)

> VaccinateWA (external site)

> COVID-19 – WA government (external site)