Are you immunocompromised?
Staying safe during COVID-19

Information for patients, family, and carers

What is the risk of becoming unwell if I do contract the coronavirus?

Most people recover well from COVID-19, however people with immunocompromise are at greater risk of developing severe illness.

This information sheet provides advice about reducing the risk of acquiring COVID-19 infection and what to do should you develop COVID-19.

People who are severely immunocompromised are at a greater risk of serious illness should they become infected with COVID-19.

It is important to make sure you are prepared and consider additional precautions to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

What can I do to protect myself from COVID-19 infection?

- **Roll up for WA and get vaccinated against COVID-19** – Vaccination is the best form of protection against COVID-19. It is recommended that people with an underlying medical condition or who are immunocompromised remain up to date with their vaccinations against COVID-19. Being vaccinated will reduce the risk of serious illness with COVID-19.

  - Find out more about how to get vaccinated at Roll Up For WA.

- **Practise physical distancing** whenever possible maintain 1.5 m distance and avoid busy/crowded areas. This is most important when indoors, especially in poorly ventilated areas.

- Avoid contact with people who have COVID-19 if possible. If unavoidable, wear a mask, practice hand hygiene, keep your distance, improve the airflow indoors by opening windows and using fans and consider using portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.

- **Wear a mask** or respirator when interacting with others in confined spaces, on public transport (aeroplanes, buses and trains), when physical distancing cannot be achieved and when visiting high risk settings, such as hospitals.

- **Avoid touching your face and mask.** If you touch the mask you should wash your hands or use alcohol based hand sanitiser before and after touching your mask.

- **Maintain good hand hygiene** – wash your hands with soap and water – when you cannot use soap and water use alcohol-based hand sanitisers. Practice hand hygiene regularly after using the bathroom, before eating, before and after contact with others and before and after touching your mask.

- **Clean and disinfect your home**. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as: mobile phones, doorknobs, light switches, taps etc.

- Make sure you **continue to go to your usual or scheduled appointments** with your doctor.

- **You can use telehealth services for routine or non-urgent medical help**. You can also

health.wa.gov.au

speak to your pharmacist about having your medications delivered to you.

- If you're working and you are immunocompromised or have a chronic medical condition, talk to your employer or workplace about undertaking a risk assessment and **have a sick day plan in place**.

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing, runny or blocked nose, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain, headache, loss of taste or smell, loss or appetite, diarrhoea, nausea and/or vomiting.

If you are experiencing any new symptoms listed above, you should have a COVID-19 test (rapid antigen test (RAT) or PCR test).

If you feel short of breath, or feel very unwell in any other way, you should go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

What to do if you test positive

It is important that you seek medical advice as soon as possible if you have a positive test result for COVID-19 (RAT or PCR test).

There are medicines currently available to treat COVID-19. It is important that they are started as soon as possible after symptoms develop.

If attending the GP clinic or high risk setting for urgent medical care or treatment, you should contact the facility beforehand and let them know you have tested positive.

Once medical attention has been sought, it is recommended to stay at home until your symptoms have resolved. Work from home if possible.

To reduce the spread of COVID-19 it is recommended that you wear a mask when leaving the house. Place the disposal mask straight in the bin after use then sanitise your hands. Wash cloth masks after each use or daily at a minimum.

Cover coughs and sneezes. Use a tissue or your inner elbow. Throw the tissues in the bin and sanitise your hands.

Register your positive COVID-19 result with the Department of Health.

> If you develop any signs or symptoms of COVID-19,
>
> **get tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible and seek medical attention if you have a positive COVID-19 test result.**

Medications for treating COVID-19

Treatments for COVID-19 help people from becoming very sick. Not everyone diagnosed with COVID-19 will need these treatments, but they are of most benefit to people who are at risk of severe disease or people who are in hospital with severe COVID-19.

Over time, viruses can change and develop into slightly different forms, otherwise known as variants. Some medicines may not work as effectively at preventing infection caused by the newer variants of the virus and you may be offered different treatments over time. Your doctor will know which treatment is best for you.

Discuss with your GP or healthcare provider about your eligibility for COVID-19 treatment(s) and creating a COVID-19 action plan.

Online and telephone support services
National Coronavirus Helpline
COVID health information and advice
1800 020 080 – 24-hour service

Healthy WA
Online COVID-19 health information and advice
https://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/coronavirus

WA Government
Information and advice on the COVID-19 Coronavirus for the community and businesses in Western Australia
https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus

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