

Self-Isolation

What does staying at home mean?

Staying home is a precautionary measure to protect those around you – your family, friends, colleagues – from possibly contracting COVID-19. Self-isolation is an effective measure of prevention. We are asking people to take simple, common-sense steps to avoid close contact with other people as much as possible, like you would with the seasonal flu virus. We know it may be a stressful time, but taking these measures will help protect you and your family, and all of Ascension from COVID-19 and other common infectious diseases.

As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people other than the family members/companions you travelled with. You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or colleagues to drop off food and supplies.

Things you can do to make it easier

Staying at home may present its own challenges, but there are things you can do to make the time easier.

- You need to plan ahead and think about what you need to be able to stay at home for up to 14 days.
- Talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need in advance.
- Talk to your employer to see if you can work from home during this time, if possible.
- Think about and plan how you can get access to food and other supplies such as medications.
- If you need supplies while you are staying at home, ask friends or family to drop off anything you need or you can order supplies by telephone. Make sure any deliveries are left outside your home for you to collect.
- You can keep in touch with friends and family over the phone, through or other means of contact or other means
- Physical exercise is good for your wellbeing. Continue to do take light exercise in your home.
- You can still go outside, but you need to limit your contact with others.
- Aim to stay in a well-ventilated room with a window that can be opened. Try to keep the window open as much as possible to enable ventilation and airflow as this will help to keep clean air moving through your room.

Guidance for suspected Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Wash your hands often

Clean your hands frequently throughout the day by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitiser will help protect you and the people you live with. This step is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of infection to you and to other people. If you live with others, they should also wash their hands regularly as a precaution.

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 elbow. Throw used tissues in a lined rubbish bin, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds making sure you dry them thoroughly. You can also use hand sanitiser.

If you have someone who is caring for you, they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed. The cleaner should then clean their hands.

Facemasks

Facemasks are not recommended as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection. They play an important role in clinical settings, such as hospitals, but there's very little evidence of benefit from their use outside of these settings.

While you stay home, try to separate yourself others who are not self-isolating

As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people other than the family members/companions you are self-isolating with. You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food.

If you have a garden, it is fine to do gardening as you aren't in close contact with other members of your household.

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Use of shared spaces if you live with others who are not self-isolating

Although those who share a house, such as families, will be asked to self-isolate together, some people on Ascension share accommodation with people they do not necessarily live with (such as those in barracks). For these people it will therefore be important to take some precautionary steps.

Try to keep shared spaces well ventilated. Clean surfaces after you use them and try to avoid touching them after you have cleaned them. This means areas like kitchen benches and sinktops.

If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while others are present. Take your meals back to your room to eat. It may be easier for someone else in your household to prepare your food and you avoid the kitchen area. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly, remembering to use a separate tea towel.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others within shared accommodation. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Don't have visitors in your home

Don't invite or allow social visitors, such as friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or other means of contact.

Laundry

Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. It may be easier for someone else to fold and put away common laundry items (such as towels and tea towels) and provide a supply for you. You should fold and put away your own laundry items.

Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

Don't ask others to do your laundry.

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If you live with children

Try to explain to your children what is happening in a way that is easy to understand. Tell them you are all staying at home to protect other people. Try to avoid worrying children. Remind them that you may not actually be sick, but you are being very safe to protect them and others.

What we have seen so far is that children with COVID-19 appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow this guidance.

If a child develops symptoms, you should contact the hospital on 66252. You will all need to self-isolate from the onset of their symptoms.

If you are breastfeeding while staying at home

There is currently no clinical evidence to suggest that the virus can be transmitted through breast milk. Infection can be spread to the baby in the same way as to anyone in close contact with you. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breast milk or by being in close contact with your child, however, this will be an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife.

If you wish to breastfeed, take precautions to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 to the baby by:

- washing your hands before touching the baby, breast pump or bottles
- avoiding coughing or sneezing on the baby while feeding at the breast
- cleaning any breast pump as recommended by the manufacturer after each use
- considering asking someone who is well to feed your expressed breast milk to the baby

If you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or a breast pump with someone else.

If you live with an older, vulnerable or pregnant person

You might live with or provide care to an elderly or vulnerable person (person who is immune compromised or with comorbidities e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension).

Guidance for suspected Coronavirus (COVID-19)

It is important everyone in your household practices good hand and cough hygiene, to try and minimise the chance of the virus being transmitted.

If the person develops symptoms, you should contact the hospital at 66252.

Getting food and medicine

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

Taking care of your mental health and wellbeing

Your emotional and mental health is important. It is normal to feel stressed or lonely when self-isolating, but there are some things you can do to feel better

Reach out to your usual supports, like family and friends, and talk about how you feel. We also recommend sticking to a routine such as having regular mealtimes, bedtimes and exercising.

If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk with a health professional, and the hospital can be reached on 66252.