

Advice from the Chief Public Health Officer



Changes to COVID-19 requirements from Friday 14 October 2022

Following a decision by National Cabinet, and a commitment from the State and Commonwealth Governments, isolation requirements for people who test positive to COVID-19 in South Australia were removed effective Friday 14 October 2022.

While isolation is no longer mandated, many people in our community remain significantly vulnerable to COVID-19 and we all need to work together to minimise the risks of severe COVID-19 and death by ensuring measures continue to protect the members of our community most at risk.

Below I have outlined my health advice to the public on what steps to take to keep our community safe.

Testing positive for COVID-19

- Anyone with cold or flu symptoms should continue to get tested for COVID-19 and please stay at home while you have symptoms, even if you get a negative COVID-19 result, to protect our community and people who have a higher risk of getting very sick.
- In South Australia, if you test positive using a rapid antigen test (RAT), you must still report your result using the [online form](#) on the SA Health website.
- I strongly recommend people who test positive to COVID-19 stay home until their symptoms resolve and to take additional precautions if they must leave their home.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, you may be infectious for up to 10 days, but you are most infectious in the two days before your symptoms start and while you have acute symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, cough and fever).
- To reduce the risk to others if you test positive for COVID-19:
 - Stay home until your acute symptoms have cleared (usually 5 to 7 days)
 - Wear a mask when indoors or on public transport if you must leave the house,
 - Avoid large gatherings and crowded indoor places – this is not the time to spread your germs around
 - Don't visit people at high risk of severe illness, or anyone in a hospital, or an aged or disability care facility for at least 7 days
 - Advise your employer and discuss when you should return to work. If you work in a sensitive setting such as health, disability or aged care, a longer period away from your workplace is necessary to protect other staff, patients, residents and clients.
- People you live with or spend a lot of time indoors with are at the highest risk of catching COVID-19 from you. Consider wearing a mask at home, keep the house well ventilated and try not to share rooms with other family members, if possible, to prevent spreading COVID-19 to them.

Close contact with someone with COVID-19

- If you have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you are at an increased risk of getting COVID-19, especially if you live in the same household.
- There are important things you can do to reduce the risk to others as a close contact of someone with COVID-19:
 - Monitor for symptoms. If you get sick you should get tested and stay at home until you are well.
 - Don't visit people at high risk of severe illness, or anyone in a hospital, or an aged or disability care facility. If you must visit, do a rapid antigen test before you go and make sure you mention this to staff.



- Wear a mask when indoors and on public transport.
- Frequent rapid antigen testing may help identify the infection early. This is particularly important if you are in contact with people at high risk of severe illness.
- Following this close contact advice for at least 7 days will help to protect our community, in particular people at risk or with health vulnerabilities, while you are potentially infectious.

If you are at higher risk of severe illness with COVID-19

- Getting tested when you have COVID-19 symptoms is especially important for people who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and who may be eligible for oral antiviral treatments.
- Antiviral treatments significantly reduce the risk of severe illness and hospitalisation from COVID-19.
- You are eligible for antiviral treatments when you get COVID-19 if you are:
 - 70 years and above regardless of risk factors
 - 50 years and above with two additional risk factors
 - Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, 30 years and above with two additional risk factors
 - People aged 18 years and above with severe immunocompromise (low immune functioning which could be due to certain medications or health conditions).
- I recommend you speak with your GP or health care provider now about your eligibility for COVID-19 treatments, so you can access them quickly if you do test positive. They may also provide you with a pathology test form, which will be handy if you do get symptoms.
- If you test positive using a rapid antigen test, please make sure you report this to SA Health as this will assist you accessing antiviral treatments.
- Third and fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccine are particularly important to protect you from the Omicron variant.
- To continue protecting those most at risk in South Australia, public and private hospitals will continue to have policies requiring wearing of face masks. GPs and other health care sites are also likely to continue to enforce mask requirements to protect at risk patients and clients.
- Please respect others who wish to, or require you, to wear a mask.
- COVID-19 vaccination requirements will continue to apply to people working in disability care and residential aged care facilities, as well as people working for ambulance services and in public and private hospitals.

SA Health continues to remind the whole community to take steps to stay safe:

- Stay home if you're sick
- Stay up to date with your COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations
- Consider wearing a mask in crowded indoor places
- Consider doing a rapid antigen test before visiting people at high risk of severe illness.

For more advice on how to stay safe and prevent the spread of respiratory viruses including COVID-19, visit www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/COVID-19



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PROFESSOR NICOLA SPURRIER

Chief Public Health Officer

SA Health