

Fact sheet for the COVID@home program



The COVID@home program has been developed to provide safe and supportive care for individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 who are well enough to be treated within the home.

Introduction

Most COVID-19 cases will experience mild to moderate symptoms. The COVID@home program will provide individuals with access to 24 hour a day, seven day a week safe and supportive remote healthcare in the home. Depending on an individual's circumstances, they may also be given a kit containing devices specifically designed for the COVID@home environment. These devices enable the COVID@home team to virtually monitor their symptoms and recovery. Individuals can opt in and out of the program at any time. COVID-positive individuals enrolled in the COVID@home program will be required to isolate at home for at least seven days. The program is available statewide, including in regional and rural areas of Tasmania.

COVID@home team

Individuals enrolled in the COVID@home program will be supported by a team of qualified staff from the Department of Health including doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals. The COVID@home team will work with COVID-positive individuals to ensure they have the health, social and wellbeing support they need.

The COVID@home team is available for advice and support to anyone who has tested positive to COVID-19. Anyone who has tested positive can call the COVID@home team on 1800 937 363, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

With the individual's consent, the care team will work with other healthcare providers such as general practitioners (GPs), disability support providers, carers or other support providers to ensure the right support is provided.

Suitability for the COVID@home program

Individuals will receive an SMS within 24 hours after registering their positive RAT result or receiving notification of a positive

PCR result. This SMS will contain a survey asking a range of questions including if the person would like to be enrolled in the COVID@home program. The survey must be completed.

If the individual would like to be enrolled in the program, the care team will assess the individual's situation and needs. An individual's level of care will be influenced by risk factors such as:

- age
- vaccination status
- symptoms severity
- if the individual has a suppressed immune system
- if the individual is pregnant
- if the individual identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Each individual will be assessed and placed in either low, moderate, or high-risk category. Where an individual or family cannot be managed in the home, other options will be explored to provide support and care through either a Community Case Management Facility or, if they are very unwell, in Hospital. Each individual's needs will be considered as part of this decision.

Observations within the home

Once it is determined that it is safe for an individual to stay at home, and they elect to, they will be enrolled in the COVID@home program. People are triaged into a pathway for care within the COVID@home program that determines whether they require devices for virtual health monitoring.

Low

Individuals can access support from the COVID@home team 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They will receive an SMS from COVID@home about the support service available to them.

Moderate – high

Individuals will receive full support from the COVID@home team 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and a virtual healthcare monitoring kit with devices to support clinical assessments.

24-hour remote monitoring and support

If an individual requires additional monitoring and support from the COVID@home team, they will be provided with a monitoring kit that will be delivered direct to them via courier.



The monitoring kit will include a smart phone device, a thermometer to check the individual's temperature, and a monitor to check their oxygen levels and heart rate. You will submit your checks daily using the smartphone device. The smartphone device will alert you when it is time to complete your checks. The information will feed directly back to the clinical team who will contact you if required to discuss your symptoms and make sure you have the care you need. The team will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week provide additional support as required.

Escalation of care

All individuals will have 24-hour access to health support via the COVID@home direct line. If an individual becomes more unwell, the team are available to provide additional support and implement processes to escalate care.

This may include more frequent check-ins with the team, or transfer to a community case management facility or hospital if required.

If an individual is concerned about their symptoms or has any other health concerns they would like to discuss, they can phone the COVID@home care team on 1800 973 363.

If an individual has difficulty breathing or is seriously unwell and it is an emergency they should call triple zero (000) immediately. They must alert ambulance staff to their COVID-19 diagnosis.

Social and welfare supports

The COVID@home team consists of allied health professionals including social workers and other support coordinators, to ensure individuals in the COVID@home program have access to the right services if they require additional support. The COVID@home healthcare team will connect individuals with the right care to assist them to manage any other health or social needs they are unable to manage by themselves.

Isolation

You must isolate at home or in private accommodation for a minimum of 7 days, depending on your symptoms. If you're living with others, isolate away from them. For more information visit www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/positivecase. The Department of Health will email you a medical clearance letter as proof of your release from isolation.

If you have monitoring devices, a courier will collect the kit and return it to the Department of Health.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are an individual's options if they choose not to participate in the COVID@home program?

COVID@home is an opt-in program. If an individual chooses not to participate and can suitably isolate at their own home, they will be managed by usual care providers and their GP. Under the Public Health Act individuals will still be required to isolate at

home, even if they choose to opt out of COVID@home. The individual can choose to opt back into the COVID@home program anytime during their isolation period by ringing COVID@home on 1800 973 363.

Can in home support be provided if an individual is enrolled in the COVID@home program?

The COVID@home team will seek your consent to work with your usual carer/service provider to ensure they can continue to provide services to you when you are COVID-19 positive. Carer/service providers have been developing protocols and procedures to ensure their safety in working in a COVID-19 environment to ensure you can remain cared for in your preferred setting.

Is COVID@home available to individuals who live in a group home or disability residential/accommodation?

Public Health will contact COVID-positive individuals to undertake a contact tracing interview and determine an individual's suitability to isolate at home. If an individual is living in shared accommodation, Public Health will need to assess if that individual could isolate safely away from others in the household, or whether they should be moved to a suitable premises such as a Community Case Management Facility. The Department of Health will work with each individual to ensure they are in the best location to recover from COVID-19.

Can a relative or friend provide in home support to individuals enrolled in the COVID@home program?

Individuals enrolled in COVID@home will need to abide by the conditions of their isolation. As part of the intake assessment, the COVID@home team will assess whether individuals require a carer and will provide guidance as to how this can be safely managed. There should be no unapproved visitors.

What support is available under the COVID@home program to individuals who have different communication needs?

The COVID@home team will work with each individual to ensure they are well supported while recovering from COVID-19. If an individual has existing care arrangements, the COVID@home team will work with existing healthcare providers, disability support providers, carers and any other supports to ensure the individual is safe and supported.

For individuals enrolled in the COVID@home program, is support available to help them undertake their daily monitoring if they are provided with monitoring devices?

Yes. The COVID@home team are available to help an individual undertake their daily monitoring.

Access to interpreter services

Call the COVID@home direct line to access a translator and interpreter service in your preferred language.