

# 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 safe and supportive 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, that enable the COVID@home care team to virtually monitor their symptoms and recovery. Individuals can opt in and out of the program at any time. COVID-positive individuals in the COVID@home program will be required to isolate at home for at least seven days. The COVID@home program will provide care 24 hours a day, seven days a week by remote monitoring and online support from qualified health staff within the Department of Health. The program is available statewide, including in regional and rural areas of Tasmania.

## COVID@home care team

In the COVID@home program, COVID-19 cases will be supported by a team of qualified health staff from the Department of Health including Doctors, Nurses, and Allied Health professionals. The COVID@home care team will work with COVID-positive individuals to ensure they have the health, social and wellbeing support they need.

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 they would like to be enrolled in the

COVID@home program. You must complete this survey. If they would like to be enrolled in the program, our care team will assess an 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 put into one of the below risk categories:

- **Low risk:** most people will experience mild to moderate symptoms and are able to manage their isolation at home. If an individual is categorised as low risk with mild symptoms, they will receive full support from the COVID@home care team 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Moderate – Moderate Plus:** if an individual's survey response shows that they need additional support from the COVID@home care team, they will receive full support from the COVID@home care team 24 hours a day, seven days a week, AND will be provided with devices for 24 hours a day seven days a week virtual health monitoring, specifically designed for the COVID@home environment.
- **High Risk:** if an individual needs extra support to recover from COVID-19, they may isolate and receive treatment in a dedicated Community Case Management Facility. If the individual is very unwell due to COVID-19, they will be treated in hospital.

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 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, they will be enrolled in the COVID@home program. Individuals will be triaged into one of four pathways: low, moderate, moderate plus, or high. The pathway will determine:

- whether they require devices for virtual health monitoring
- whether daily check ins are required and if so how many are required
- the number of observations required if virtual health monitoring devices are provided.

Regardless of which category an individual is in or whether they

are enrolled in the COVID@home program, the care team is available for support and advice 24/7 via 1800 973 363 or the smart phone if provided.

#### **Low**

Individuals will be able to contact the COVID@home care team at any time with any concerns. They will receive an SMS from COVID@home about the support service available to them.

#### **Moderate**

Individuals will receive a COVID@home virtual healthcare monitoring kit with devices to submit observations and survey twice per day.

#### **Moderate Plus**

Individuals will receive a COVID@home virtual healthcare monitoring kit with devices to submit observations and survey twice per day and receive a video call from the team.

#### **High**

Individuals classified as high risk (with low-risk symptoms) will be monitored under the COVID@home program. Individuals will receive a COVID@home virtual healthcare monitoring kit with devices to submit observations and survey twice per day and will receive video calls from the healthcare team.

## **24-hour remote monitoring and support**

If an individual requires additional monitoring and support from the COVID@home care 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 measure their oxygen levels and heart rate.



Individuals will also be asked to provide daily readings and answer a survey. This information will feed directly back to the team who will check in daily to monitor an individual's symptoms to ensure they are safe and cared for. The team will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to monitor the individuals' condition and 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 additional observations and video calls, face to face assessments and in some cases may result in a transfer to

a Community Case Management Facility or hospital.

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 care 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 need to stay in a room away from others while you get better, so you don't give the virus to anyone else.

You will need to isolate for at least 7 days from the date of your first positive test, possibly longer depending on your symptoms.

The Department of Health will email you a medical clearance letter as proof of your release from isolation.

## **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 individuals choose 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.

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

The COVID@home care 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?**

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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 (CCMF). 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 healthcare 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 care 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 care 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?**

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.

**More information**

For more information visit  
[www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/covidathome](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/covidathome)