

WEST RAND DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY



GUIDELINE ON HOME TREATMENT WITH COVID-19 ILLNESS

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WHEN YOU SUSPECT THAT YOU HAVE COVID – 19, YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR GP AND FOLLOW HIS/HER INSTRUCTIONS

Recommendations of how to look after yourself at home if you have coronavirus (COVID-19)

Most people with coronavirus (COVID-19) feel better within a few weeks. You may be able to look after yourself at home while you recover.

Information:

While you're ill, ask a friend, family member or neighbour to check up on you. Arrange a regular call or talk through a doorway (not face to face) so they can check how you're doing.

1. Treating a high temperature

If you have a high temperature, it can help to:

- get lots of rest
- drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to avoid dehydration – drink enough so your urine is light yellow and clear
- take paracetamol if you feel uncomfortable

2. Treating a cough

If you have a cough, it's best to avoid lying on your back. Lie on your side or sit upright instead.

To help ease a cough, try having a teaspoon of honey. But do not give honey to babies under 12 months.

If this does not help, you could contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice about cough treatments.

Important: Do not go to a pharmacy

If you or someone you live with has COVID-19 symptoms, you must all stay at home.

Try calling or contacting the pharmacy/doctor instead.

Information:

Get help while you're staying at home

Family members or neighbours can help you while you have to stay at home (self-isolate).

They can help with things like collecting shopping and medicines. A lot of shops do deliver upon request as well

3. Things to try if you're feeling breathless

If you're feeling breathless, it can help to keep your room cool.

Try turning the heating down or opening a window. Do not use a fan as it may spread the virus.

You could also try:

- breathing slowly in through your nose and out through your mouth, with your lips together like you're gently blowing out a candle
- sitting upright in a chair
- relaxing your shoulders, so you're not hunched
- leaning forward slightly – support yourself by putting your hands on

Your knees or on something stable like a chair

Try not to panic if you're feeling breathless. This can make it worse.

Get urgent advice from your GP or medical services if:

- you're feeling gradually more unwell or more breathless
- you have difficulty breathing when you stand up or move around
- you feel very weak, achy or tired
- you're shaking or shivering
- you've lost your appetite
- you're unable to care for yourself – for example, tasks like washing and dressing or making food are too difficult

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED: CONTACT YOUR GP OR CALL FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IF:

- you're so breathless that you're unable to say short sentences when resting
- your breathing has got suddenly worse
- you cough up blood
- you feel cold and sweaty, with pale or blotchy skin
- you have a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin and does not fade when you roll a glass over it
- you collapse or faint
- you feel agitated, confused or very drowsy
- you've stopped peeing or are peeing much less than usual

Babies and children

Call your doctor if you're worried about a baby or child. If they seem very unwell, are getting worse, or you think there's something seriously wrong, call YOUR GP.

Do not delay getting help if you're worried. Trust your instincts.

Pregnancy advice

If you're pregnant or have recently given birth, contact your midwife, GP or maternity team if you have any concerns or questions.

If you have a pulse oximeter

A pulse oximeter is a device that clips on your finger to check the level of oxygen in your blood.

Low levels of oxygen in your blood can be a sign you're getting worse. A pulse oximeter can help you spot this before you feel breathless or have any other symptoms, so you can get help quickly.

You may be asked by a GP or healthcare professional to monitor your oxygen levels if you're at a high risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19.

If you're using a pulse oximeter at home, make sure that the device will work properly and is safe if used correctly.

It's helpful to write down your readings, so you know what your oxygen level is when you first use the pulse oximeter and can spot if your level is going down. This can also help if you need to speak to a healthcare professional.

Speak to a GP or healthcare professional before using your pulse oximeter and tell them if you have any questions or concerns.

If you have a dark skin

Pulse oximeters work by shining light through your skin to measure the level of oxygen in your blood.

There have been some reports they may be less accurate if you have dark skin. They may show readings higher than the level of oxygen in your blood.

You should still use your pulse oximeter if you have one or can get one. The important thing is to check your blood oxygen level regularly to see if your readings are going down.

When to get medical help

What to do if your blood oxygen level drops

Blood oxygen level	What to do
95 to 100	Stay at home and continue to check your blood oxygen level regularly
93 or 94	Check your blood oxygen level again within an hour – if it's still 93 or 94, call your GP for advice
92 or below	Check your blood oxygen level again straight away – if it's still 92 or below, contact your GP or medical services

If your blood oxygen level is usually below 95 but it drops below your normal level, call your GP surgery for advice.

Information:

If you need to call for help, tell the person you speak to what your blood oxygen level is.