

## Self-isolation guidance

### Who needs to self-isolate?

If you have recently arrived in The Gambia either directly or via transit from a country with widespread community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) or have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you are required to **self-isolate for 14 days**.



### Stay at home or in your hotel

When travelling home or to your hotel to start self-isolation, you should **use personal transport**, such as your own car, to minimise exposure to others. If you need to use public transport (e.g. taxis), follow the first two safety measures outlined below on how to prevent spread of coronavirus.

During the 14 days isolation, you **MUST** stay at home or in your hotel. Only people who usually live with you should be in the home, while you restrict your movement to **ONLY** your room and toilet. **Do not entertain visitors**. If you are in a hotel, avoid contact with other guests and staff. Place orders for personal supplies and meals to be delivered at your room doorstep for you to pick up.



If you are in good health, there is no need to wear a face mask at home. If you must move around your home, such as to use a shared toilet, you should wear a face mask. If you do not own one, take care not to cough or sneeze on others.

### Monitor your symptoms

During isolation, **monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19** such as a fever (38°C or higher), dry cough, sore throat, tiredness and/or shortness of breath. Other possible symptoms include chills and body aches.



### What to do if you notice symptoms?



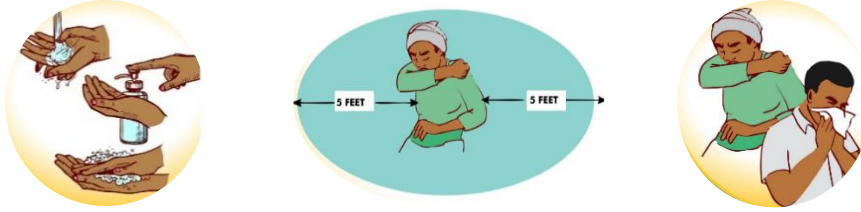
The Medical Research Council Unit The Gambia at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (MRCG at LSHTM) Fajara campus is currently the **ONLY** testing centre for COVID-19 in the Gambia. However, its facilities are not open to walk-in requests for testing at the moment. COVID-19 testing is facilitated by the Ministry of Health.

If you develop any of the symptoms listed above, **DO NOT** visit a hospital or health centre. You should telephone the Ministry of Health **National Coronavirus Helpline on 1025** from any network, free of charge, to inform them of your travel history and symptoms. The team at the Ministry of Health is working diligently to ensure isolation and testing, in line with tried and tested guidelines.

### What you can do to feel better

- Drink plenty of water throughout the day to keep yourself hydrated (more than 1.5 litres a day)
- Eat nutritious foods that will help to build your immunity such as protein, fruits and vegetables

## How can you prevent the spread of coronavirus?



- **Wash your hands often with soap and water** (i.e. before and after eating, after going to the toilet, and after opening and closing doors).
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol) if soap and water are unavailable.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with tissue paper, dispose of tissues in your personal rubbish bag or flush down the room's toilet, and wash your hands thoroughly.
- If you are in a shared home separate your personal waste into disposable waste bags, then double the waste bags to be put aside and disposed after 3 days.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth, with unwashed hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces with disinfectants such as bleach.
- Avoid sharing toilets with others at home. However, if you must, use them after all others and clean and disinfect used objects and surfaces with disinfectants.
- Clean all food items and utensils thoroughly before preparation and do not share your cooking and eating utensils (e.g. bowls, spoons, forks, etc.)
- Clean all your used utensils and wash all your clothes in preferably hot and soapy water. This will ensure the elimination of all viruses.

## Advice for others living with you

Others that live with you are not required to be isolated unless they meet one of the isolation criteria outlined above. If you develop symptoms and are suspected to have COVID-19, they will be classified as close contacts and will also need to be isolated.

## Managing the 14-day isolation

Being in isolation can be stressful and boring. Suggestions include:

- **Keep in touch with your family and friends** via telephone and social media.
- Learn about COVID-19 from credible sources such as the World Health Organization and MRCG at LSHTM bulletins.
- Keep up normal daily routines, such as eating, staying hydrated and exercise.
- Do things that help you relax and use isolation as an opportunity to do activities you usually do not have time for.



## What happens when your self-isolation period ends?

If you have not developed any symptoms of COVID-19 during the 14-day isolation period, then you are free to end self-isolation and resume your daily activities such as going to work, the market, etc. However, if you do develop any COVID-19 symptoms during the 14-day period, you must self-isolate for a further 7 days from the day you first showed symptoms and monitor them.

## More information

For more advice and information, **call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1025**, from any network, free of charge.