



# Returning from overseas during COVID-19

## Defence Community Organisation

### How to cope during self-isolation

**As COVID-19 continues to unfold, Australians are increasingly being asked to take precautionary measures to protect ourselves and the broader community.**

As a result, a number of ADF members and families who have recently returned from overseas will be required to self-isolate for 14 days.

Self-isolation is crucial to help stop the spread of the virus, but it can also be challenging for many people. It means letting go of our normal routines and reducing contact with people we care about.

It is completely normal for people to have a range of reactions and feelings in relation to self-isolation, such as worry, boredom, frustration, stress, or low mood. If you or someone you know has to self-isolate, there are a number of things you can do to look after your overall wellbeing.

#### MAKE A PLAN

Making a plan can help you feel calmer and more in control of the situation. As you would expect, self-isolation is restrictive and you may need to work out how you and your family will be able to access essential goods and services, such as food, medication or learning resources.

If possible, arrange for family or friends to pick up and drop off needed items at your door or use online shopping (major supermarkets are slowly implementing priority online access for vulnerable customers, such as those in mandatory isolation).

Another option might be to utilise a meal prep kit or similar services, order pre-made meals or order take-away or convenience food. A lot of local small businesses, such as restaurants, are becoming innovative in how they deliver services to the community.

There are also a range of community groups and charities providing services to help people during this difficult time.

#### LEAN ON SOCIAL NETWORKS

Remaining socially connected is important for your wellbeing and can help buffer against stress or loneliness. However, you may need to be a bit creative in how you do so, such as calling, video chatting, emailing or using social media to stay in touch.

If you have children another strategy to keep them both occupied and connected to loved ones is to get them to draw a picture or write a letter that you can email or share on social media. It's a good time to check your privacy settings if you're putting anything personal up.

During this challenging time, it is also important to look out for each other and to check in and – wherever possible – help each other, even if that is to just offer a listening ear.



## KEEP YOURSELF OCCUPIED

It can help to view self-isolation as an opportunity to do activities, though some may have to be modified, that you previously haven't had time to do.

For your wellbeing it is essential to keep doing the basics and day-to-day activities, like getting enough sleep, eating regularly, staying hydrated and doing the things you enjoy. For example, you could exercise, which releases feel-good endorphins, by using online training programs, read, watch a movie or learn a new hobby or even a language.

It is essential to prioritise your own and your family's wellbeing and even a few minutes here and there can make the world of difference. If you begin to feel overwhelmed then take time out, even a couple of minutes of controlled breathing or grounding exercises.

## GET EXTRA SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

If you are feeling overwhelmed then reach out. Depending on your individual circumstances, a range of practical and emotional support services are available for Defence families, such as problem solving any issues or concerns you may have, counselling or referral to appropriate community services and longer term supports.

If you would like to discuss any of the above, have questions, or just want someone to talk to remember that the Defence Family Helpline will continue to be available throughout it all, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The Helpline is staffed by qualified human services professionals, including social workers and psychologists, who can provide you with assessment, assistance or referral, anytime day or night.

## MORE INFORMATION

It's important to get accurate information from a reliable source. The [Department of Health](#) has a number of fact sheets with practical guidance on how to self-isolate and what is expected of you and others living in the shared home.

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for people with a suspected case](#)

Defence Community Organisation offers a wide range of support services to ADF members and their families.

For more information on this factsheet and other Defence Community Organisation support services visit [www.defence.gov.au/dco](http://www.defence.gov.au/dco) or call the all-hours Defence Family Helpline on 1800 624 608.

