

Recover from COVID-19 after discharge from hospital



Western Cape
Government

December 2020

STAY SAFE

**MOVE
FORWARD**

1 Continue to isolate

2 Monitor your symptoms

3 Manage your cough

4 Manage your breathlessness

5 Manage your tiredness

6 Look after your general health

7 Look after your mental health

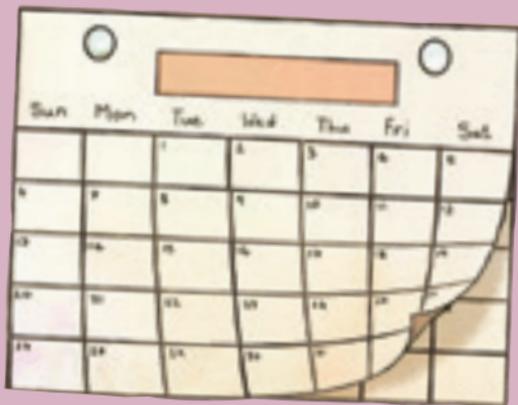
8 Look after your chronic conditions

9 After your recovery

1

Continue to isolate

- If you had a **moderate** or **severe** illness, isolate for 10 days from the date oxygen was stopped or your condition became stable. Your doctor will advise on this.
- If you had a **mild** illness but were admitted for another reason (like diabetes), isolate for 10 days from the date your symptoms started.
- If you have already completed 10 days of isolation, you are no longer infectious and can stop isolation.



2

Monitor your symptoms

- Symptoms may last for several weeks. This will depend on the severity of your illness and other chronic conditions you may have.
- Ongoing symptoms may include coughing, breathlessness, tiredness, muscle weakness, and difficulties with memory and concentration.
- If your symptoms last more than 6–8 weeks, worsen at any time, return after getting better, or you develop new symptoms, contact your health facility or the Provincial Hotline for advice.



Seek healthcare urgently if you experience any of:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Confusion or are unable to wake.
- Chest pain or pressure that won't go away.

Avoid public transport.

Use your own transport or call an ambulance on 0861 911 111.



3

Manage your cough

- If lying on your back makes your cough worse, try sitting up or lying on your side.
- Stay hydrated by taking frequent small sips of fluids.
- A warm drink, like lemon and honey in warm water, may help to soothe your throat.
- If your cough doesn't go away by 6–8 weeks or you start to lose weight, develop night sweats, fever, chest pain or cough up blood, contact your health facility or the Provincial Hotline for advice.



4

Manage your breathlessness

- After severe COVID-19, you may have ongoing breathlessness.
- Positions which may help include sitting, leaning forward while sitting, leaning against a wall while standing, or lying on your side propped up with pillows.
- Use a breathing exercise to control your breathing: relax your neck and shoulders, breathe in slowly through your nose, allow your lungs to fill from bottom to top, then breathe out gently through pursed lips.



5

Manage your tiredness

- Your level of tiredness may vary from day to day.
- You may find it difficult to do things you normally do, such as washing, dressing and housework.
- Adapt your activities to save energy:
 - Limit activities to those that are necessary or enjoyable. Ask a family member or friend to help you with chores.
 - Allow enough time to complete activities and to rest between them.
 - Avoid rushing and planning too many activities.



6

Look after your general health

Ensure you eat enough to help your body recover. Choose foods high in protein (like beans, lentils, peas, fish, eggs and meat) and eat more fruit and vegetables.



Drink enough fluids.

Get enough rest.



**Avoid smoking
and alcohol.**



**Slowly increase your activity
to regain muscle strength.
It is normal to have some
breathlessness with
activity. If you become too
breathless to speak, stop
and rest.**

7

Look after your mental health

- It is common to feel anxious or worried, have a low mood or struggle with sleep while recovering from COVID-19. You may also have feelings of panic, nightmares or unpleasant memories of your hospital stay.
- Doing these things may help:

Stay connected with family and friends by phone or social media.



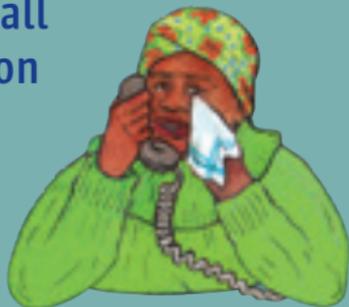


Find a creative or fun activity to do.

Avoid drinking alcohol and using drugs.



- If you are finding it difficult to cope, visit your health facility or call the Mental Health Helpline on **0800 12 13 14** (24 hours) or **SMS 31393** and a counsellor will call you back.



8

Look after your chronic conditions

Take your medication as prescribed to help control your condition, prevent complications and keep you well.



Keep all your clinic appointments.

If you have diabetes, monitor your glucose if possible and attend your clinic for follow-up within 1 month, or as advised by your doctor.



Ask someone to collect your medication if you can't leave home, or organise delivery of your medication with the **Pocket Clinic App**: WhatsApp **087 240 6122**.



9

After your recovery

- It is not yet certain if having COVID-19 once protects you from getting it ever again. It is unusual, but it may be possible, to get COVID-19 a second time.
- Remember the virus is in the air and we are breathing in small droplets.
- So even after recovering, it is still important to wear a mask and make safer choices.

MAKE SAFER CHOICES

1. Sick? Stay home & arrange a test
2. Keep physical distance
3. Wear a mask
4. Cover your cough
5. Open doors & windows
6. Avoid crowds, close-contact & confined spaces
7. Wash/sanitise hands often



**Western Cape
Government**

Western Cape COVID-19 Hotline

080 928 4102 (tollfree)

National WhatsApp

0600 123 456

Diabetes WhatsApp Helpline

081 578 6636

www.westerncape.gov.za