



Western Cape
Government

Health



PACK
Practical Approach to Care Kit

2

Information and advice for the home:
COVID-19 at home



Practical Approach to Care Kit

PACK Home · 2021

Welcome to PACK Home

The Practical Approach to Care Kit – PACK – is used by nurses, doctors and community health workers in their everyday work to care for patients at the clinic and in the community – **PACK Adult**, **PACK Adolescent**, **PACK Child** and **PACK Community**.



PACK Home is designed for people seeking more information about how to care for their own health and the health of their family at home.

PACK Home is published in small volumes and has been made available in several languages. It covers a wide range of topics, including staying COVID-19 safe, managing COVID-19 in the home, understanding the COVID-19 vaccine and coping with a chronic condition.



Browse or download **PACK Home** volumes from www.coronawise.org.za

PACK Home was developed by the Knowledge Translation Unit, University of Cape Town Lung Institute, in partnership with the Western Cape Department of Health. We thank Western Cape Department of Health and their clinicians and managers for their valuable contribution to this document. See the list of their names on our website www.knowledgetranslation.co.za.

DISCLAIMER: This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not a replacement for a visit with a nurse, doctor or other healthcare professional. If you have concerns about your individual medical situation, please see a healthcare professional. This information is provided on an 'as is' basis without any warranties regarding accuracy, relevance, usefulness or fitness for purpose. You use this information at your sole risk.

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You may have COVID-19. What now?

You may have COVID-19 if:

- you develop a cough, fever, sore throat or lose your sense of smell or taste.
- you had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
- the screen you had for COVID-19 symptoms at work, school or during a community health worker check is positive.



If you have COVID-19 symptoms, or had close contact with someone with COVID-19, separate yourself to prevent spreading coronavirus to others.

Depending on how much COVID-19 there is where you live, tests might be kept for those at risk of severe COVID-19, for those in hospital and for sick health workers.

You could be at risk of severe COVID-19 if:

- you are 55 years or older.
- you are an adult of any age with any of the following:
 - diabetes
 - TB or HIV
 - kidney disease or hypertension
 - chronic lung disease (asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis)
 - on cancer treatment.



If you have COVID-19 symptoms, contact your health facility or a COVID-19 hotline to discuss having a COVID-19 test, especially if you are at risk for severe COVID-19.

- A nurse or doctor will do the test by rubbing a swab at the back of your throat or in your nose.
- They will wear a mask and goggles or visor to avoid catching coronavirus.
- It might be uncomfortable for a short while.
- Expect to receive the result by phone (call or SMS) in about 2 days.



If you have COVID-19 symptoms, assume you have COVID-19, even if you are waiting for the test result or have not had a test. Look after yourself and make sure you separate yourself to prevent spread to others.

Contact with someone with COVID-19?

- If you had close contact (face-to-face, 1 metre or less apart) or live with someone with COVID-19, you may have caught it.
- It can take up to 10 days before you become ill with COVID-19.
- If you have coronavirus, you may pass it on, even before becoming ill.
- You must quarantine yourself: live separately from others to prevent spreading coronavirus.

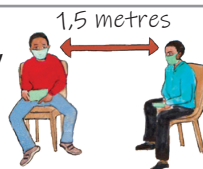
Prevent coronavirus spread to others

Stay at home. Quarantine yourself from others in a separate room. If you cannot do this, you may need to stay in a quarantine facility to check if you get COVID-19 and prevent spread to others.



If you can quarantine at home, make sure you follow these rules:

If you make contact with others, keep apart, wear masks, and open doors and windows.

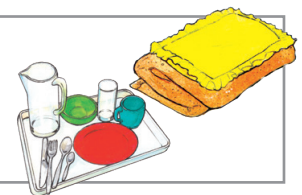


Wash your hands often.

Keep your home clean of coronavirus. See page 13.

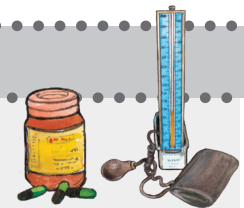


Use separate dishes, towels and bedding. Wash well.



Look after yourself

- Look after your health.
- If you have a chronic condition, adhere to your treatment.



Recognise when to seek healthcare

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms – a fever, cough, sore throat – contact your health worker or phone a COVID-19 hotline. See page 17.

- Visit a health facility urgently if you have difficulty breathing, confusion, chest pain that won't go away or you cannot wake up.
- Call ahead. Avoid public transport. If needed, call an ambulance.

Even if you feel well, you can still spread coronavirus to others. You can stop quarantine if you are well and only after 10 days.

What will happen if you have COVID-19?

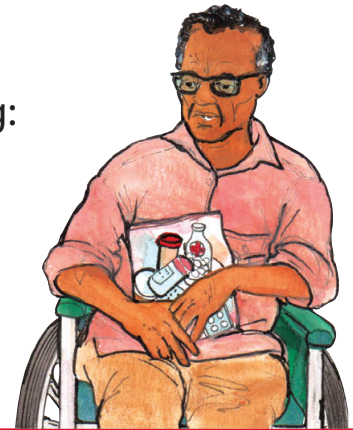
How will you feel?

- COVID-19 is a disease caused by a coronavirus.
- Many people who catch coronavirus will not get sick.
- Most people who do feel unwell with COVID-19 get a mild illness similar to flu, causing cough, fever, sore throat, tiredness, aching muscles and perhaps a change in smell or taste.
- In some people, COVID-19 can be severe, causing pneumonia with difficulty breathing.



You could be at risk of severe COVID-19 if:

- you are 55 years or older.
- you are an adult of any age with any of the following:
 - diabetes
 - TB or HIV
 - kidney disease or hypertension
 - chronic lung disease (asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis)
 - on cancer treatment.



How long will it last?

- Most people who get COVID-19 recover completely within 5–7 days.
- It may last longer, especially if the person has severe COVID-19.
- Sometimes COVID-19 symptoms can get worse after the first week.

What treatment will you need?



- There is currently no specific cure or treatment for COVID-19; it will resolve by itself.
- You will need to rest and can take medication to ease symptoms like pain or fever.
- If you develop severe COVID-19, you will need oxygen and other care in hospital.

Will you spread coronavirus to others?



- You can spread coronavirus easily to others, even if you have mild symptoms or are not unwell at all.
- Try to avoid spreading it, especially to those at risk of severe COVID-19.
- You will need to isolate yourself from others in your home for at least 10 days.

Where should you stay while you have COVID-19?



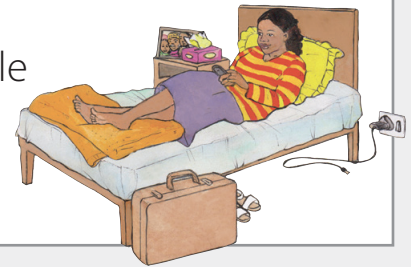
Stay at home in your own room if:

- you can isolate yourself from others at home
- you are able to get healthcare easily if you need it.



Move to a special isolation facility for people to stay safely while they have COVID-19 if:

- you cannot stay in your own room at home or
- you are unable to get to healthcare easily.



Go to hospital if you develop severe COVID-19 with any of the following:

- difficulty breathing
- confusion
- chest pain or pressure that won't go away or
- difficulty waking up.



- It is important that you avoid contact with others, especially if they are at risk of severe COVID-19.
- If you are unsure if you can isolate at home safely, phone a COVID-19 hotline or speak to your healthcare provider.

What to do when you have COVID-19

For at least 10 days, you need to look after yourself and try to prevent spreading coronavirus to others.

Isolate yourself from others.

See page 6.



Wear a mask when needed.

See page 8.



Look after your health.

See page 9.



Take care of your symptoms.

See page 10.

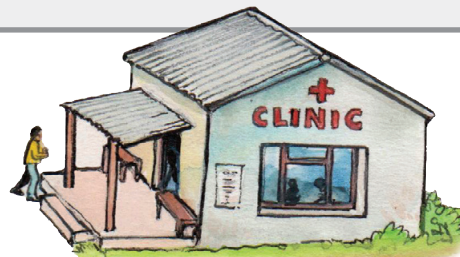
Keep your home clean of coronavirus.

See page 13.



Get help if you need it.

See page 14.



Live separately with COVID-19

If you have COVID-19, you must isolate yourself from others for at least 10 days to prevent coronavirus from spreading.

- Isolate yourself from others at home in a separate room and stay at home. If possible, arrange for those at risk of severe COVID-19 to stay elsewhere.
- If you are unable to stay in a separate room, you may need to move to an isolation facility to check on your health and prevent spreading coronavirus to others, especially if there are people at home at risk of severe COVID-19.



Take these steps to live separately:

Live in a separate room and keep the door closed.

Leave meals, medications and laundry at the door.

If possible, use a separate bathroom. If using a shared bathroom, use it alone after everyone else has finished.

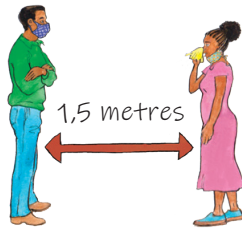
Have separate eating utensils like cutlery, plates, cups, and trays. Wash with soapy water.

Use separate bedding and towels.

Limit the number of caregivers – make sure they are not people at risk of severe COVID-19.

If it is difficult to isolate yourself completely from others all the time:

Keep at least 1,5 metres apart from others.



Don't share a bed.



Stay away from people at risk of severe COVID-19: those over 55 years and those with chronic conditions.



Wear a mask.

Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw the tissue safely in a bin.



Spend time outside at home if you can.



Open windows and doors.

Those at home need to quarantine from the public as they are your contacts and perhaps have COVID-19 too. See page 2.

Wear a mask with COVID-19

- The best way to prevent coronavirus from spreading is to keep separate from other people.
- If you have to be in contact with others, wear a mask. Those you have contact with should wear a mask too.
- Children under 2 years should not wear a mask.



Speak to your healthcare provider or a COVID-19 hotline about which mask to use:

- Medical masks work best, but are in short supply. If available, the person with COVID-19, his/her carer and anyone in the home at risk of severe COVID-19 should wear a medical mask.
- If no medical masks are available, use a cloth mask.

Use a mask safely:



- Wash your hands before and after using your mask.
- Ensure your mask covers your mouth and nose.
- Touch only the straps when you remove it.
- Replace your mask if wet.



Do not touch your face or fiddle with your mask.

Do not share masks.



Do not leave used masks lying around; they are likely to have coronavirus on them.

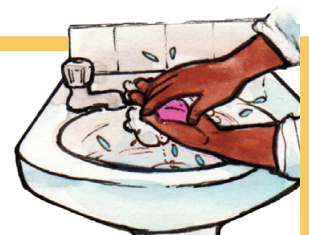


Wash your cloth mask with soap and very hot water (60°C). If the water is not very hot, boil the mask for 1 minute to disinfect it.



Have at least two masks so that you have a clean one ready.

- **After you take off your mask, wash your hands.**
- **Discard a used medical mask safely in a closed bin or sealed plastic bag.**



Look after yourself with COVID-19

Most people with COVID-19 can look after themselves at home until they recover.



Get enough rest.

Get up and walk about regularly.



Get some fresh air if you can.

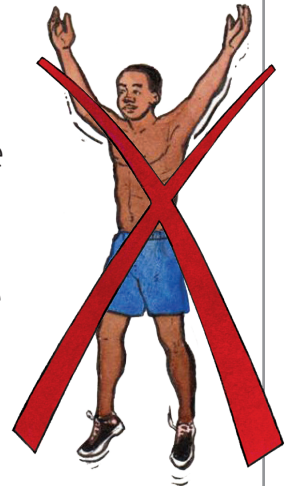


Drink enough fluids so that your urine is pale yellow.



Avoid drinking alcohol; it can put strain on your liver and dehydrate you.

Avoid exercise for at least two weeks after you have recovered.

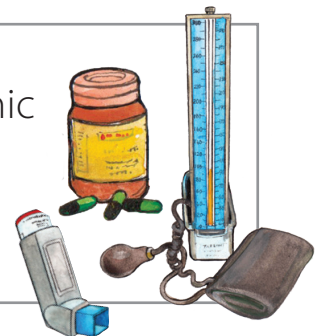


Don't smoke.



Look after your mental health. See page 11.

Look after your chronic condition if you have one. See page 12.



Take care of your COVID-19 symptoms

There is no cure for COVID-19. Take these steps to ease your symptoms:

Fever

Try to rest if you have a fever or chills. Place a cool cloth on your forehead. Avoid lots of blankets or a hot water bottle.



Cough

Lying on your back may make a cough worse. Try sitting up or lying on your side.

Pain – headache, sore throat or body aches
Take paracetamol as instructed when you need it for pain.



Diarrhoea

Drink sufficient fluids to keep your urine pale yellow or clear.

Nausea or vomiting

Drink sips of fluids often. Eat small meals if you can and avoid fatty food.



Monitor your symptoms carefully



- Check your symptoms every morning and night for 10 days.
- Expect your symptoms to last 5–7 days. If your symptoms get worse or you have symptoms longer than 5 days, call your healthcare facility or a COVID-19 hotline.

- Visit a healthcare facility urgently or ask someone to phone for help if you have difficulty breathing, pain or pressure in the chest that won't go away, you become confused or cannot wake up.
- Call ahead. Avoid public transport, if possible. If needed, call an ambulance.



Look after your mental health with COVID-19

Having COVID-19 might feel scary and make you stressed.

Know the facts

- There are many scary stories about COVID-19.
- Ignore gossip and fake news – listen to advice from trusted sources.
- Remember that most people who get COVID-19 have it mildly and recover completely, even if they are older or have chronic conditions.

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019



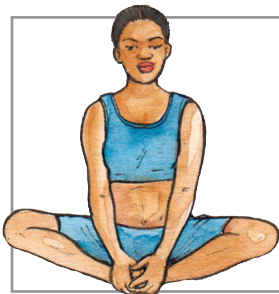
Stay connected

Check in with family and friends on phone or video calls.



Avoid alcohol

It might slow your recovery and lower your mood.



Do some slow deep breathing each day to relax.



Get enough sleep.

Take time to relax

Find a creative or fun activity to do.



Get help if you need it

- If you are feeling stressed and need someone to talk to, reach out to someone you trust or call a helpline. See page 17.
- Read about getting help during COVID-19 on page 14.



**Do not be ashamed of having COVID-19.
Get help if you are being harassed about having COVID-19.**

Looking after your chronic condition

- A chronic condition is a health issue that is long-term or lifelong.
- If untreated, it can cause complications that can make you unwell and unable to cope with everyday life.
- If you have a chronic condition, then your risk of severe COVID-19 is higher, but you may just have it mildly.
- The goal of treating a chronic condition is to control it and to prevent complications.

Manage your chronic condition

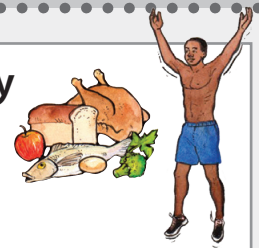


Understand your chronic condition

Ask your health worker for help if you have any questions.

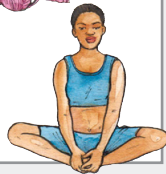
Have a healthy lifestyle

- Get active.
- Eat healthily.



Look after your mental health

- Spend time with supportive friends or family.
- Find a creative or fun activity to do.
- Do a relaxing breathing exercise each day.



Don't smoke or abuse alcohol or drugs

Ask for help to stop if you need it.



Take your medication reliably

Adhere to your treatment to help control your condition, prevent complications and keep you well.



Don't miss your appointments

- Keep all your appointments at the clinic.
- Ask someone to collect your medication while you cannot leave home.



Get help when you need it

- Phone a helpline for advice about coping with a chronic condition. See page 17.
- Chat to a relative or friend.
- Find out if you qualify for a disability grant if your chronic condition makes it difficult for you to work.



Keep clean with COVID-19

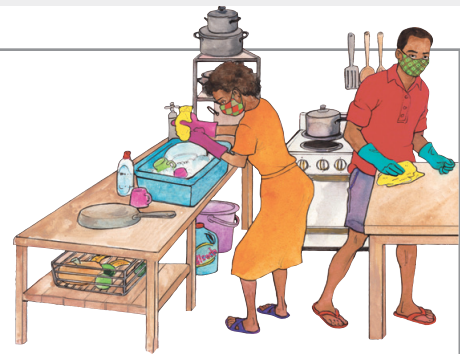
When someone with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they may leave coronavirus on surfaces. When others touch these, they may catch the virus if they touch their faces.

Clean and disinfect to prevent the spread of coronavirus

- Wear gloves while cleaning and disinfecting. If the gloves are not disposable, reuse them only for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean surfaces once a day and if dirty. Use a detergent or soap and water before disinfecting.
- Disinfect to remove the coronavirus. Use a diluted bleach solution of 6 teaspoons bleach and 1 litre water. Wipe on with a cloth and leave to air dry.



Disinfect regularly surfaces and objects that you touch often - once a day and again after use.



- Wash the laundry with detergent and in warm or hot water if possible.
- Wash at 60–100°C if you have a washing machine.

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands well with soap and water after handling laundry and rubbish, and doing cleaning and disinfecting.
- Do not use shared towels to dry your hands.



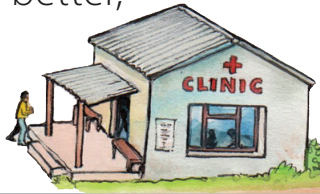
Getting help with COVID-19

If you have COVID-19, you may have a lot that worries you.

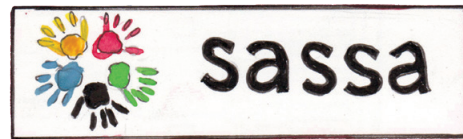


Find these resources to help tackle your problems

Contact your **healthcare facility** if your COVID-19 symptoms get worse or do not get better, or if you need more medication for your chronic condition.



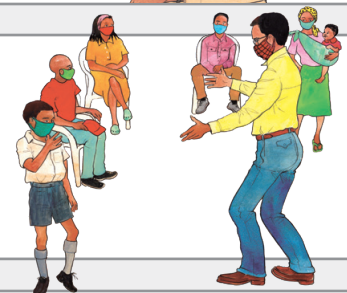
Contact **SASSA** if you don't have money or food and qualify for a grant.



Call a trusted friend if you are lonely or you need help with your shopping and errands.



Speak to a **community leader** to find out what help is available for those with COVID-19 or if you are being harassed for having COVID-19.



Talk to a **community health worker** to get help with your medication for a chronic condition and to discuss COVID-19.

Phone a **helpline** if you have trouble at home or are worrying too much. See page 17.



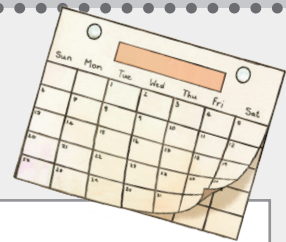
Recovering from COVID-19



- You can recover completely from COVID-19 and return to normal life.
- Once recovered, you do not have coronavirus anymore and so can no longer infect others.
- It is possible, but unlikely, that you will get COVID-19 again. Any certificate that guarantees that you will not get COVID-19 again is false.

Know when it is safe to return to normal life

Return to normal life only once you are well and have no COVID-19 symptoms. Then only stop isolation from others depending on your experience of COVID-19.



If you had COVID-19 mildly and looked after yourself at home, you can stop isolation from others **10 days after your symptoms started.**

If you were in hospital for COVID-19, then you can stop isolation from others **10 days after your symptoms stopped.**



If you never had COVID-19 symptoms, but your COVID-19 test was positive, then you can stop isolation from others **10 days after the test was done.**



- Once your period of isolation is over and you feel well, it is safe to return to work, school and public life.
- There is no need to repeat your COVID-19 test.
- If you need one, ask for a letter from your healthcare facility saying you are fit to return to work.
- Delay starting exercise again for at least two weeks after your symptoms stop to avoid heart complications.

Keep an eye on your health

- If your symptoms persist or you become unwell again, contact your healthcare facility or phone a COVID-19 hotline.
- Continue to look after your chronic condition if you have one. See page 12.



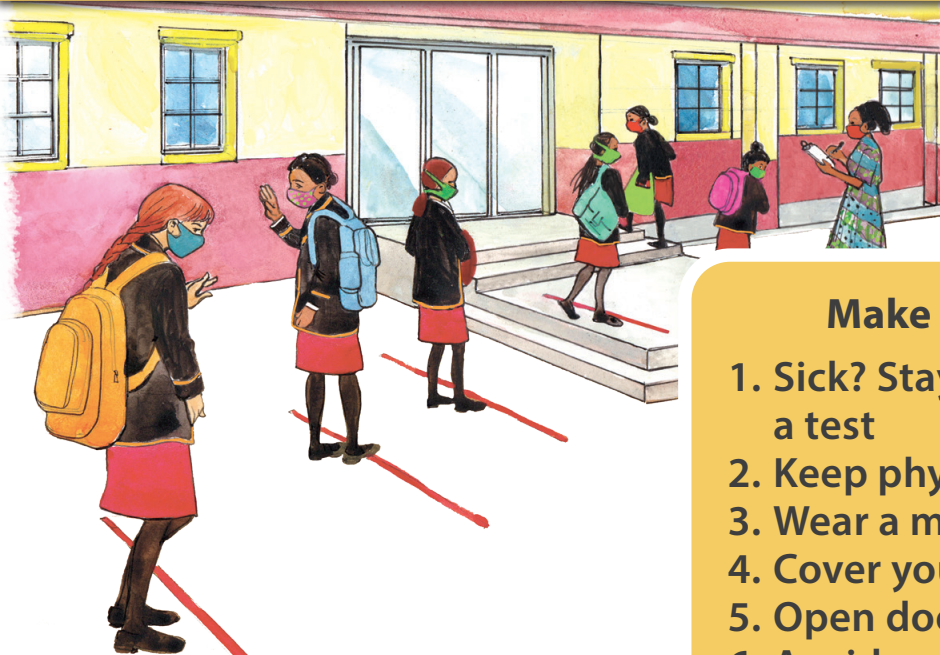
Do not be ashamed of having COVID-19

- COVID-19 is a new disease and people often fear what is new or unknown.
- Some people with COVID-19 have been harassed by others for having COVID-19.
- Speak to a community leader, employer, school principal or trusted friend if you are harassed.
- Help others to understand COVID-19. Use reliable information.



www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Remember to still keep physical distance from others, wear a mask in public and wash your hands often.



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

Helplines and websites

Coronavirus – COVID-19

National Coronavirus (COVID-19) General Public Hotline	Latest information on coronavirus (COVID-19)	0800 029 999 WhatsApp 'Hi' to 0600 123 456
Western Cape Government Call Centre	For COVID-19 health-related concerns	0860 142 142
National EVDS Self-Registration App	To register to be vaccinated against COVID-19	https://vaccine.enroll.health.gov.za

Getting help

Food Parcel Service – Western Cape	Food parcels for those who qualify for assistance	021 469 0235
Legal Aid Advice Line	Information and guidance on any legal matter	0800 110 110 (07:00–19:00 Monday–Friday)
Medic Alert	Assistance with application for Medic Alert disc or bracelet	021 425 7328 (09:00–16:00) 021 461 0000 (24-hour emergency line)
South African Social Security Agency (SASSA)	For information about social grants	0800 60 10 11 (toll free) GrantEnquiries@sassa.gov.za 021 469 0200 GrantsEnquiriesWC@sassa.gov.za

Chronic conditions

Diabetes South Africa	Information, eating advice and support workshops	WhatsApp line: 081 578 6636
Epilepsy South Africa	Information, counselling and support groups	0860 37 45 37 (08:00–16:30 Monday–Thursday, 08:00–14:00 Friday)
Heart and Stroke Foundation	Information and support groups if you have had a stroke or suffer from any heart condition	021 422 1586 (08:00–16:00)
National AIDS Helpline	Counselling and information if you have HIV or are thinking of having an HIV test	0800 012 322 (24 hours)
People living with Cancer	Cancer-related queries and support	0800 033 337
Arthritis Foundation of South Africa	Information, education and support groups for those with arthritis	0861 30 30 30

Counselling and crisis support

Lifeline National Counselling Line	Counselling for any life crisis and referral to support services	0861 322 322 (24 hours) 065 989 9238 (WhatsApp call counselling)
Childline SA (ages 0–16 years)	For children and young adolescents who are in crises, are being abused or at risk of abuse and violence	0800 055 555 (24 hours)
Gender-Based Violence Command Centre	Assistance if experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault or abuse	0800 428 428 *120*7867# from any cell phone
National Shelter Movement SA (NSMSA)	A helpline for victims of abuse or domestic violence to call and speak to a social worker	0800 001 005 (24 hours; tollfree)
TEARS Foundation	SMS helpline in cases of domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse	*134*7355# www.tears.co.za
National Human Trafficking Helpline	Reporting human trafficking	0800 222 777
Rape Crisis	Counselling and court support for rape survivors over 13 years of age	021 447 9762 (24 hours): English 021 361 9085: Xhosa 021 633 9229: Afrikaans WhatsApp line: 083 222 5164
MobieG	Live-chat counselling for teens	www.mobieg.co.za (Sunday from 18:00, Monday–Thursday from 19:00)
Safeline	Abuse counselling and court preparation	0800 035 553 (24 hours)
South African Police Services	Reporting a crime	08600 10111
Child Welfare South Africa	Reporting child abuse or neglect	0861 452 4110
Police Child Protection Unit	Reporting child abuse or neglect	10111 childprotect@saps.org.za
Family and Marriage Association of South Africa (FAMSA)	Support and education during stressful times	011 975 7106/7 national@famsa.org.za

Alcohol, drugs and smoking

Alcoholics Anonymous	Counselling, education and support groups if you require assistance with alcohol abuse	0861 435 722 (09:30–17:00 Monday–Thursday, 09:30–15:00 Friday)
SA National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence	Support and help for people addicted to drugs and alcohol, as well as their families	0800 456 789 SMS 31393
Narcotics Anonymous (NA)	Information and support for drug addicts	0861 006 962
National Council Against Smoking Quitline	Information and support to stop smoking	011 720 3145 082 840 3548

Mental health

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG)	Counselling and support if you have depression or anxiety	0800 456 789 SMS 31393
Suicide Crisis Line	For any suicide-related support	0800 567 567 (08:00–20:00) SMS 31393 and a counsellor will call back
Cape Mental Health	Counselling, support, rehabilitation, training and re-integration programmes	021 447 9040 (08:00–16:30 Monday–Friday)
Mental Health Helpline	Counselling and support if you have a mental illness	0800 12 13 14 (24 hours) SMS 31393 and a counsellor will call back
CIPLA 24-hour Mental Health Helpline	Helpline for mental disorders, anxiety, depression and suicide	0800 456 789 WhatsApp line: 076 88 22 77 5
Dementia SA	For support, awareness, training and information on dementia	0860 636 679 (24 hours) 021 421 0078 www.dementiasa.org



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