

COVID-19:

Navigating exposure and symptoms

If you believe you have been exposed to or are experiencing symptoms concerning for COVID-19, here are recommendations.

Determining your risk with COVID-19 exposure depends on a few factors.

Exposure

Any close contact with someone who:

- has tested positive and has symptoms or
- has tested positive without symptoms

Interaction and close contact

Close contact with others includes:

- being within 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or more
- caring for someone at home with COVID-19
- touching
- hugging
- kissing
- sharing eating or drinking utensils
- being sneezed or coughed on

Individuals with COVID-19 can potentially infect others at least 2 days prior to developing symptoms themselves. Therefore, if you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 within 2 days of them developing symptoms or 2 days prior to their positive test date if no symptoms, you will need to quarantine.

You only need to quarantine if:

- you have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

If you had contact with another individual who, has had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine, but instead take some precautions, such as wearing a mask and physical distancing in public areas while monitoring yourself for symptoms.

Symptoms

Symptoms can range from mild to severe and start **about 2-14 days after exposure to the virus** and include:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

Testing

If you develop symptoms during quarantine, you need to be tested. If you do not have symptoms, call your provider to arrange testing toward the end of your quarantine period.

COVID-19 test results

What should you do if you are diagnosed with COVID-19?

When diagnosed with COVID-19, you will need to inform your close contacts of the positive test result using a date either 2 days before symptoms started or 2 days prior to your positive test date. If no symptoms, those close contacts will need to quarantine and monitor for symptoms, and you will need to isolate yourself at home.

What should you do if you have symptoms and your COVID-19 test is negative?

While a negative test is reassuring, there is a 20-40% chance that your initial COVID-19 test is a false negative, meaning you could still have COVID-19. For this reason, it is recommended that you self-isolate at home for minimum of 10 days regardless of the test result. Follow the recommendations about coming out of isolation. If your symptoms worsen or persist, contact your healthcare provider where a repeat COVID-19 test will be considered.

Quarantine

If you've been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, you will need to quarantine.

What is quarantine?

Staying at home following a COVID-19 exposure, to see if you become sick and prevent infecting others. During a quarantine, monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

How long should my quarantine last?

The length of your quarantine will vary and is based on your exposure scenario.

Scenario 1: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 in the community and with no further close contact. **You need to quarantine for 14 days from the last day of close contact.**

Scenario 2: Close contact with household member who has COVID-19, while avoiding further close contact during their isolation period: **Quarantine for 14 days from last day of close contact.**

Scenario 3: Close contact with household member who has COVID-19, and with repeated close contact during the isolation period or additional household member has become sick with COVID-19: **Restart 14 day quarantine from last day of repeated close contact or whenever the new household member starts isolation.**

Scenario 4: Close contact with household member who has COVID-19, have continued close contact: **Quarantine at home during household member's isolation period, and then for an additional 14 days after the household member completes their isolation period.**

Self-care during COVID-19

During illness, focus on getting rest, drinking fluids (enough to urinate 4-6 times a day), and use acetaminophen or ibuprofen as directed on package for pain and fever control.

If you experience shortness of breath that is not severe, follow these body positioning instructions:

- Do not lay flat on your back.
- Change position every 30 minutes to 2 hours. Rotate between lying on your left side, stomach, right side, sitting up, and in a reclining position propped up with 2-3 pillows, as this can often help to open your lungs.

Isolation

Self-Isolation will separate sick people from those who are not sick.

What is self-isolation?

Staying separated from others, including from those within your home if you have symptoms concerning for COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with COVID-19. This will help prevent infecting others with the virus. If you live with others in your home, try to use a separate bedroom and bathroom, wear a mask while in shared areas, and practice physical distancing from household members.

How long should isolation last?

Anyone with concerning symptoms or with diagnosed COVID-19 should isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the start of symptoms or 10 days from a positive test date if no symptoms. If your fever persists and symptoms are not improving after 10 days, you will stay in isolation longer. For those with severe COVID-19 illness or severe immunosuppression, the minimum isolation time is 20 days for symptom onset or positive test.

When can I come out of isolation?

For those with mild to moderate COVID-19 illness, you no longer need to isolate once 10 days have passed since your symptoms started AND your fever is gone for 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications) AND your overall symptoms have improved. If your fever continues and your symptoms are not improving, you will stay in isolation until you are fever free and symptoms improving after 10 days. Once out of isolation, continue to wear a mask and practice physical distancing to protect others.

How to care for myself if I've been diagnosed with COVID-19

When diagnosed with COVID-19 you will need to isolate yourself at home for no less than 10 days and will no longer need to isolate when the above criteria is met.

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, inform your close contacts using the date of 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms or 2 days prior to your positive test date if no symptoms. **These close contacts will need to quarantine.**

Most people can recover with COVID-19 at home. Some patients have worsened during the second week of illness needing hospital care. Remember to track your temperature, blood oxygen level and number of days you are ill. If your blood oxygen level drops below 90 percent, seek medical care. If you develop breathing difficulties, persistent chest pain or pressure, confusion, decreased alertness, inability to stay awake, or blue lips or face seek immediate medical attention or dial 9-1-1.