

COVID-19:

Navigating exposure and symptoms

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, contact your primary care provider to let them know. They may have further instructions or be able to answer questions you may have as you rest and recover at home.

Exposure and close contact

What is exposure?

Any close contact with someone who:

- has tested positive with symptoms or
- has tested positive without symptoms

What is close contact?

Close contact with others includes:

- being within 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or more throughout the course of a day (24 hours)
- caring for someone with COVID-19
- touching
- hugging and/or kissing
- sharing eating or drinking utensils
- being sneezed or coughed on

Symptoms

Symptoms can range from mild to severe and start **about 2-14 days after exposure to the virus** and include, but are not limited to:

- 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

Seek emergency medical care or call 9-1-1 if you begin experiencing any of the following:

- trouble breathing
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- new confusion
- inability to wake or stay awake
- bluish lips or face

Quarantine

If you have been exposed to COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine, however you will need to wear a high-quality, well-fitted mask inside for 10 complete days, while around others, including while at home. The first day of close contact is Day 0.

Watch for symptoms for 10 full days. **If you develop symptoms, you should isolate and test immediately.**

If you do not experience any symptoms, test on day 6. If the test is negative, continue to use a mask until day 11. If you tested prior to day 6, then retest on day 6.

During the masking period, avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease. You should also avoid traveling and places where you need to remove your mask around people, like restaurants or gyms.

If you cannot wear a mask, follow all other recommended steps, including testing on day 6 and watching for symptoms. You should try to prevent transmission to others the best you can and improve ventilation in your home.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 30 days:

- You do not need to test unless you develop symptoms.
- You do need to mask for a full 10 days from your last close contact (day 0 is the day of close contact).

We recommend performing an antigen COVID-19 test. Antigen testing locations can be found on the Minnesota Department of Health's website and at local pharmacies.

If you live with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, you should wear a high-quality, well-fitting mask during the ill person's isolation period and then for an additional 10 days (day 0 is the ill person's last day of isolation). Continue to watch for symptoms, test on day 6 from the last close contact, and avoid people at high risk of severe disease.

If you work in healthcare, your employer will have specific return-to-work guidance.

Isolation

What is isolation?

Staying home and separating yourself from others **if you have symptoms or have a positive COVID-19 test result** prevents infecting others.

You should isolate yourself away from those you live with, if possible, by using a separate bedroom and bathroom, wearing a mask in shared areas, washing hands often, practicing social distancing, and not sharing items such as drinking glasses, plates, eating utensils, towels or bedding with others.

When should I isolate?

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, isolate yourself at home and get tested for COVID-19.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, isolate yourself at home.

How long should isolation last?

Stay home until all three below are true:

- It has been five days since you first felt sick. Day 0 is the day your symptoms started, and day one is the first full day after your symptoms started
- AND your overall symptoms have improved
- AND you are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication

If you do not meet this criterion, you need to stay in isolation until it can be met. Wear a high-quality, well-fitting face mask for 10 days when indoors and around others, including in your home. Your 10 days begin the day after you started experiencing symptoms or if you are not experiencing symptoms, the date of a positive COVID-19 test.

You can resume most activities on day 6.

After your period to stay home ends, continue to do the following for another five days:

- Do not be around others who are at risk for getting very sick from the COVID-19 virus (older adults, those living in long-term care facilities, and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart diseases, obesity, or weakened immune systems).
- Do not go to places where you will need to take off your mask (such as restaurants or gyms).
- Do not eat around others at home or work.
- Avoid travel.

If you test positive with no symptoms and later develop symptoms, you must start over at day 0, the day your symptoms start.

After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.

Are there times when isolation should last longer?

In the following cases, a longer isolation period is recommended. If you:

- Are experiencing moderate symptoms such as shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Are experiencing severe symptoms and were hospitalized for COVID-19
- Have a weakened immune system

In these cases, isolate at home through for 10 days. If you are experiencing severe symptoms or have a weakened immune system, we recommend you contact your provider before the end of your isolation period.

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

While a negative test result is reassuring, there is a 20-40% chance that your COVID-19 test is a false negative and you may have COVID-19.

- If you test negative but have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, isolate for 5 days at home (day 0 is your first day of symptoms).
- If on day 6 you are without a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication AND your symptoms are improving, then mask with a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days. If you cannot use a well-fitting mask, isolate for 10 days at home. Use a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others, even at home.

COVID-19 Helplines

COVID-19 Public Hotline: 1.833.431.2053

9am–7pm | Mon–Fri

10am–6pm | Sat

CDC Hotline: 1.800.CDC.INFO (1.800.232.4635)

