

Home Isolation & Quarantine Guidelines

Isolation and Quarantine Steps for People Before and After COVID-19 Diagnostic Test Results

There are a number of reasons why you may need to be tested for COVID-19: (1) because you have symptoms of possible infection, (2) because you were in close contact with someone who was infectious with COVID-19, or (3) because you are in a job or situation that recommends or requires testing. The directions below will help you to determine what you should do while you are waiting for your diagnostic test results, and what to do after your test results are available.

What to do while you're waiting for test results:

(1) If you have any COVID-19 symptoms*, follow the Isolation Steps while you are waiting for results.

*COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell

(2) If you have no symptoms but were in CLOSE CONTACT with a person who was infectious with COVID-19, follow the Quarantine Steps while you are waiting for your test results.

(3) If you do not have COVID-19 symptoms and are not a close contact, you just need to wait for your test results. You do not need to follow Isolation or Quarantine Steps.

CLOSE CONTACT of a COVID-19 positive person = someone who was within 6 feet of the infected person for at least 15 minutes at any time beginning 2 days before the infected person had symptoms or tested positive. Close contacts include people who had 15 minutes of continuous contact with the infected person, as well as people who had repeated short-duration interactions with the infected person. Being considered a close contact does not depend on whether the contact or the infected person was wearing a face covering during their interaction.

What to do after you get your test results:

If you test COVID-19 positive, follow the Isolation Steps. If

you test negative AND:

1. You were a close contact of a COVID-19 positive person ⇒ continue to **follow the Quarantine Steps**.
2. You have COVID-19 symptoms* but are **not** a Close Contact ⇒ **follow Isolation Steps** until 24 hours after resolution of fever and improvement of other symptoms (unless otherwise directed by the Public Health Department or a physician to stay home for longer).
3. You were not a close contact and have no COVID-19 symptoms ⇒ you can resume your regular activities.

Restrictions & Information that Apply to BOTH Home Isolation & Home Quarantine:

Separate yourself from others:

- Stay at home except to seek medical care.
- Do not use public transportation.
- Separate yourself from others in your home.
- Do not prepare or serve food to others.
- Limit contact with pets
- Do not allow visitors.
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.

If you cannot meet the requirements for Isolation or Quarantine, you can call the COVID-19 Support Team at 408-885-3980 to request assistance with housing, food, or other needs.

Prevent the spread:

- Wear a mask and cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces every day.
- Wash your hands often.
- Do not share household items.

Practice homecare:

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- Seek medical care if you experience: difficulty breathing, inability to keep fluids down, dehydration, or confusion.
- Call ahead before seeking medical care, notify the provider you are under isolation, and wear a mask at all times.

Home Isolation Steps

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or you are awaiting COVID-19 test results, you must follow the Home Isolation Steps to prevent the spread of disease.

Stay home until you have recovered and are not infectious

- Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home.
- Monitor your symptoms closely and seek medical care if symptoms worsen, especially if you are at a higher risk of serious illness.¹
 - If you have symptoms, you can be with others after:
 - **At least 10 days** since symptoms first appeared, AND,
 - **At least 24 hours** with no fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications) AND
 - Improvement in other symptoms, whichever is longer.
- If you have no symptoms, you can be with others after **10 days** have passed since your first positive test was collected

Note: If you are severely immunocompromised or ill, your doctor may recommend a longer isolation period.

Close Contacts

- If you have a test confirmation or doctor's diagnosis of COVID-19, then everyone who you had close contact with from 48 hours before your symptoms began until you self-isolated should follow the Home Quarantine Steps. Please share this document with them. To request help in notifying your Close Contacts without revealing your identity to them, please call 408-970-2870.

What if you cannot separate yourself from others?

- Anyone who continues to be in close contact with you will need to extend their quarantine until 10 days from the day you finish isolating

¹If you are 60 years or older or have a condition such as heart, lung, or kidney disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, or a weakened immune system, you are at higher risk of getting more seriously ill.
²Workers with special quarantine considerations: Consult your employer if you are considered a first responder or healthcare worker and compliance with the Public Health Department's isolation and quarantine guidance would compromise the continuity of service of your operation or department. See [COVID-19 Quarantine Guidance for Healthcare Workers During Critical Staffing Shortages](#).

³If exposure occurred in a TK-12 school setting, you may be eligible to end quarantine as early as 7 days after last exposure if asymptomatic and with a negative test on day 5 or 6 after last exposure. Follow the school's specific instructions for your situation.

⁴Workers with special quarantine period considerations: Consult your employer if you are considered a first responder or healthcare worker, and compliance with the Public Health Department's isolation and quarantine guidance would compromise the continuity of service of your operation or department. If critical staffing shortages exist, healthcare workers may follow the recommendations outlined [here](#).

⁵The Public Health Department may provide alternative testing recommendations in congregate settings and during cluster/outbreak investigations.

⁶Fully vaccinated healthcare workers who have been exposed to a COVID-19 case are not required to quarantine outside of work if they meet the above criteria but should still be tested for COVID-19 **immediately and on or after 5 days** after last exposure to case. For more information, see section on [Managing Exposures Among Healthcare Workers](#).

⁷Inpatients and residents in healthcare settings should continue to follow [CDPH quarantine guidance for healthcare settings](#) following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Home Quarantine Steps

Testing⁵:

- A. All close contacts should be tested immediately if they develop symptoms.
- B. **A non-household close contact** (regardless of vaccination status) should test immediately AND on or after day 5 after last exposure to case.
- C. **A household close contact** (regardless of vaccination status) with ongoing exposure should be tested three times: 1) Immediately AND, 2) 5 days after first exposure to case AND, 3) 5 days after case completes their isolation period.
- D. **If you test positive**, follow the Home Isolation Steps above.

Quarantine Period^{3,4}:

1. For Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Close Contacts WITH Symptoms:

- Without testing, quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure AND at least 24 hours after fever resolution AND improvement in other symptoms, whichever is longer; OR
- With testing, quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen collected on or after Day 5 from the date of last exposure is negative AND 24 hours or more after fever resolution AND improvement in other symptoms, whichever is longer.

2. For Unvaccinated/Partially Vaccinated Close Contacts WITHOUT Symptoms:

- Without testing, quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure; OR
- With testing, quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen collected on or after Day 5 from the date of last exposure is negative.

3. For Previously Infected Unvaccinated Close Contacts: If a close contact had COVID-19 within the previous 90 days and has not had any new symptoms since their recent exposure to someone with COVID-19, they do not need to quarantine.

4. For Fully Vaccinated⁸ Close Contacts WITH Symptoms:

- Without testing, quarantine can end after Day 10 from the date of last exposure AND at least 24 hours after fever resolution AND improvement in other symptoms, whichever is longer; OR
- With testing, quarantine can end immediately if a diagnostic specimen collected while symptomatic is negative AND 24 hours or more after fever resolution AND improvement in other symptoms.

5. For Fully Vaccinated⁸ Close Contacts WITHOUT Symptoms: Fully-vaccinated Close Contacts^{6,7} should follow [CDC recommendations](#). In general, they are not required to quarantine if they meet all the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated⁸, AND
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure, AND
- Are not an inpatient or resident in a healthcare setting or facility.

For All Close Contacts (symptomatic and asymptomatic)

In addition to the above guidance:

- Close contacts should continue monitoring for symptoms for a full 14 days.
- If a close contact continues to be exposed to a case during their isolation, the Quarantine Period starts immediately and ends 10 days after case's isolation period ends, or if above testing criteria are met, 7 days after the case's isolation period ends.

Which groups should seek additional information on the period of their quarantine?

- Certain workers² should consult with their employer, who may contact the Public Health Department for additional guidance.