

COVID-19: Staying Safe After Exposure or Testing Positive



COVID-19 is a respiratory (lung) illness that is spread through coughs and sneezes. Some people who have COVID-19 get better in the hospital. Others with mild symptoms can get better at home.

If you have been around someone with COVID-19, you may get COVID-19. To stop the spread of the virus to others in your home and community, follow recommendations about what to do next. Guidance depends on exposure, COVID-19 test results, underlying medical conditions, and vaccination. Watch symptoms to make sure you or others get medical care.

Quarantine

You have been in close contact (within about 6 feet or 2 arm lengths for a total of 15 minutes in a 24-hour period) with someone who is COVID-19 positive, unless you have been vaccinated.

Isolation

You isolate when you have symptoms of COVID-19 or are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, even if you don't have symptoms.

If you are fully vaccinated:

- You do NOT need to quarantine unless you have symptoms
- Get tested 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms
- Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative

If you are not fully vaccinated:

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19

If you are sick and think or know you have COVID-19, stay home until 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 symptoms have improved

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but do not have symptoms:

- Stay home until after 10 days have passed since your positive viral test
- If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the steps above for those who are sick



Monitor your symptoms

COVID-19 Symptoms*

- Cough
- Shortness of breath/ trouble breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If your symptoms get worse

Call your doctor right away

Call 911 immediately if you have any of the following emergency warning signs (and tell the operator you have or may have COVID-19):

- Trouble breathing
- Ongoing pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Trouble waking up or staying awake
- Bluish lips or face

*As of May 13, 2020. Visit [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for the latest update



Consider getting fully vaccinated.

The CDC recommends COVID-19 vaccinations for everyone 12 years of age and older. Visit [TexasHealth.org/GetYourVaccine](https://www.texashealth.org/getyourvaccine) for more information.

More Tips for Staying Safe at Home

Healing at Home

If you are the primary caregiver for someone with COVID-19, visit the CDC's website to learn [how to care for them](#). If you have COVID-19 and are also a primary caregiver (a parent with young children, for example), talk with your doctor for advice on how to best protect those in your care. Anyone in the home who is sick with COVID-19 should follow the CDC's guidance for what to do if you are sick and [when it is safe to be around others](#).



Protect Yourself and Others

If you or others have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact or are waiting on results, it is important to isolate yourself from others in your household, including pets. Here's how to care for yourself at home:



Monitor your symptoms. Call 911 if you have emergency warning signs.



Keep your distance. COVID-19 is usually spread between people who are in close contact with one another. Stay in a separate room and away from others in your home if possible. Use a separate bathroom, too, if available.



Clean your hands often. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or using the restroom. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.



Wear a face mask. Wear a mask when you are around others. People who live with you should not be in the same room with you. They should wear a mask if they must enter your room.



Avoid contact with pets. There have been a small number of reports of pets testing positive for COVID-19. If possible, have someone else care for your animal(s). If you must care for a pet, avoid contact as much as possible. Do not touch, cuddle, or share food. Wash your hands before and after you interact with a pet, and wear a mask.



Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw away used tissues in a lined trash can.



Avoid sharing personal and household items. Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water or in the dishwasher.



Clean "high-touch" surfaces often with an [EPA-approved disinfectant](#)*. High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.



<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID-19-Quarantine-vs-Isolation.pdf>

* Visit <https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm> to see if your disinfectant meets the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. These products are for use on surfaces only.

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