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**Note: This guidance is no longer in effect. This document is provided only for historical purposes. Visit the [California Department of Public Health's COVID-19 website](#) for current COVID-19 public health guidance and the [Self-isolation Instructions for Individuals Who Have or Likely Have COVID-19](#) web page.**

# Self-isolation Instructions for Individuals Who Have or Likely Have COVID-19



These instructions are for people who have or likely have COVID-19. They include information for households, families, caregivers, or close contacts.

## What is self-isolation?

When you have COVID-19 it is important to self-isolate (or stay at home and separate yourself from others). You should stay in a separate room away from other people in your household to keep them safe and prevent them from getting ill.

## How can you care for yourself at home?

There is no specific treatment for the virus that causes COVID-19. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild illness and can get better with proper home care without the need to see a medical provider. Here are steps that you can take to help you feel better:

- ▶ Rest & drink plenty of fluids
- ▶ Take over-the-counter medicines as directed to reduce fever and pain (talk to a medical provider before giving a child younger than 2 years old over-the-counter cold medicines)

Note: over-the-counter medicines do not “cure” you and do not stop you from spreading germs.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Common [symptoms of COVID-19](#) include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body pain, headache, congestion or runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or new loss of taste or smell. Please note that this list does not include all possible symptoms.

## When should you get medical care?

Write down when your symptoms started and continue to monitor your health. Get medical care if your symptoms get worse, especially [if you are at a higher risk of serious illness](#). If you are 65 years or older, severely overweight, or have a health problem such as a chronic disease (e.g., diabetes) or a weak immune system, you are considered high risk and should contact your doctor, especially if you are having any symptoms. Call ahead before visiting your medical provider, you may be able to get advice by phone. If you need help finding health care, call your county’s Information Line or 2-1-1. For more information, visit [this website](#).

### Call 911 if you start to have emergency warning signs



Difficulty breathing



Pressure or pain in chest



Bluish lips or face



Confused or hard to wake



Other serious symptoms

If you call 911, tell the dispatch personnel that you have COVID-19.



# What steps can you take to protect others in your home and community?

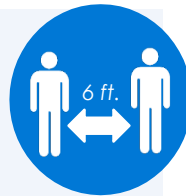
## Stay home except to get medical care

- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- If you must leave home to get medical care, call ahead of time and use a private vehicle if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, keep as much distance between you and the driver as you can. Wear a facemask (or if you don't have one, cloth face covering) and leave the windows down if possible.
- Avoid public transportation, ride shares, or taxis.
- Wear a facemask (or cloth face covering) before entering hospitals or medical offices.



## Separate yourself from other people in your home

- Stay in a separate room and away from other people.
- Try to stay away from [people who are at higher risk of serious illness](#). People who are age 65 years or older, severely overweight, or have a health problem such as a chronic disease (e.g., diabetes) or a weak immune system are considered high risk. If these people live with you, they should contact their doctor, especially if they are having any symptoms.
- Use a separate bathroom. If not possible, [clean and disinfect](#) the bathroom after use.
- Stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) from others.
- Open windows and turn on a fan (if possible) in shared spaces for good airflow.
- Do not allow visitors.
- Do not prepare or serve food to others.



## Clean your hands often

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, going to the bathroom, and before eating or preparing food.
- If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer containing (60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol). Never use hand sanitizers with methanol due to its high toxicity to both children and adults.



## Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately wash your hands.





# What steps can you take to protect others in your home and community?

## Wear a facemask or cloth face covering when around others



- Wear a facemask any time you are around other people, even at home.
- This includes any time someone else must enter the same room you are in.
- If you do not have a facemask, wear a [cloth face covering](#). Do not place a facemask or cloth face covering on anyone who has trouble breathing or is unable to remove it without assistance.
- A person who must enter your room should wear a facemask if you are unable to wear one. Afterwards they should immediately wash their hands, then remove their facemask, and wash their hands again.
- Infants and children under 2 years of age should not wear a facemask or cloth face covering. Children ages 2-8 can use them under parent or adult supervision. Parents should make sure children can breathe safely to avoid choking or suffocation.
- See [Recommendations for Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information.

## Avoid sharing personal household items



- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils with other people. Thoroughly wash with soap and water after use.
- Do not share towels or bedding with other people in your home.

## Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces every day



- High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) any surfaces that may have body fluids on them.
- Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes, following product instructions.
- See cleaning instructions in [Guidance for disinfecting your home if someone is sick](#).

## Getting help with food and other basic needs

- ▶ Try to order food or groceries for home delivery if you do not have someone to help you. Ask deliveries be left in a safe spot at your door. If you need help getting food or other necessities, call 2-1-1.
- ▶ See additional resources for: [financial help](#), [food assistance](#), [housing and homelessness](#), [emotional support](#), [childcare](#), [immigrant communities](#)

# When can you safely stop self-isolating?

## If you had symptoms, you can be with others after:

- ☑ A minimum of 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared **and**
- ☑ Your symptoms have improved **and**
- ☑ You have been fever-free for the last 24 hours (without using medicine that reduces fevers)

## If you tested positive for COVID-19 but never had any symptoms:

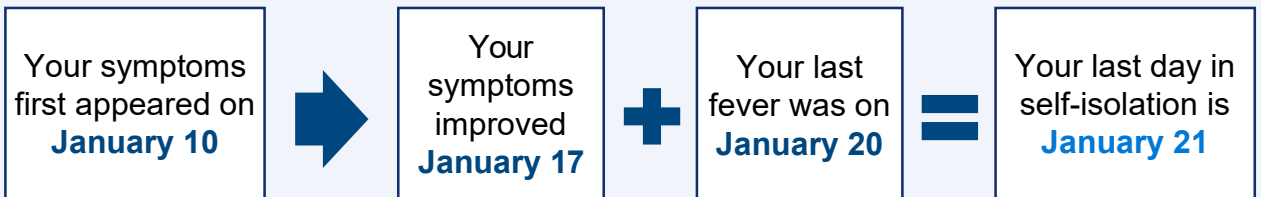
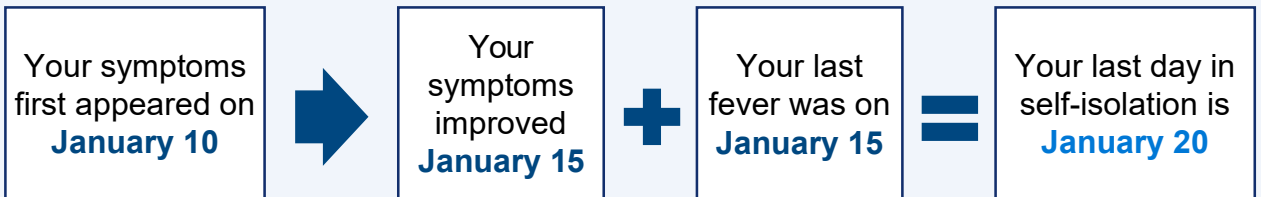
- ☑ You can be with others 10 days after your test date

See the section below for examples to help you determine when your self-isolation ends.

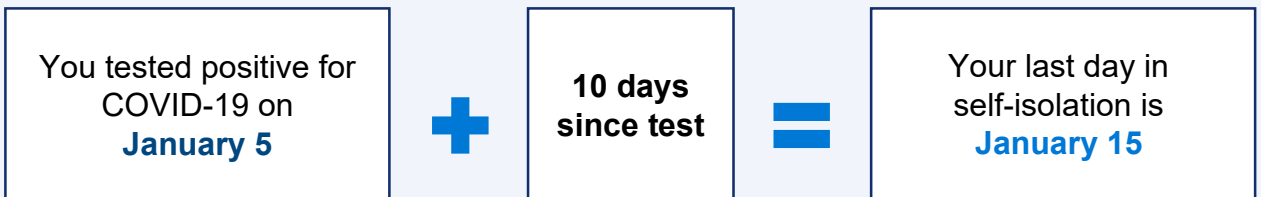
Follow the guidance of your medical provider and local health department if they tell you to stay home longer.

## Examples to help you determine when your self-isolation ends

### If you have or had symptoms:



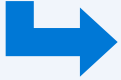
### If you never had symptoms:



## What is a “close contact”?

A “close contact” is any person who was exposed to you while you were contagious. You are considered to be contagious 2 days before your first symptoms began until you are done with self-isolation. If you had a positive COVID-19 test, but no symptoms, you are considered to be contagious 2 days before your test date until 10 days after.

### Examples of close contacts are:



- ▶ Household member, intimate partner, or caregiver
- ▶ Person who was within 6 feet (2 meters) of you for 15 minutes or more
- ▶ Person who had unprotected contact with your body fluids/secretions

### Unprotected contact with bodily fluids/secretions includes actions like:



*Being coughed or sneezed on*

*Sharing utensils*

*Caring for someone who is sick without wearing proper protective equipment*

## How can close contacts protect themselves?

Everyone should stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from you while you are self-isolating.

Caregivers and household contacts should wear disposable gloves and a facemask if:

- ▶ They clean your room or bathroom
- ▶ Come into contact with your body fluids or secretions (including sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhea)

They should remove and dispose of their gloves first, wash their hands, then remove their facemask, and wash their hands again. See cleaning instructions in [Guidance for disinfecting your home if someone is sick](#).

While both [self-isolation](#) and [self-quarantine](#) refer to ways to prevent the spread of illness, they do not mean the same thing. Close contacts who were exposed to COVID-19 need to **self-quarantine**, which means staying home for 14 days while waiting to see if they get sick.

You should instruct your close contacts to self-quarantine. You can even tell them anonymously by text or email using the website [tellyourcontacts.org](https://tellyourcontacts.org).

Your close contacts should quarantine even if they feel well because it can take 2–14 days for them to start having symptoms. People can be infected and contagious without having any symptoms. Provide them the [Self-quarantine Instructions for Individuals Exposed to COVID-19](#) for more information.

## What should you do if you have questions?

- ▶ Visit the California Department of Public Health website [cdph.ca.gov/covid19](https://cdph.ca.gov/covid19).
- ▶ Call your medical provider for any questions related to your health. If you need help finding a medical provider, call 2-1-1 or your county’s InformationLine.