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**Note: This guidance is no longer in effect.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-Quarantine Instructions for Individuals Exposed to COVID-19](#) web page.**

# Self-Quarantine Instructions for Individuals Exposed to COVID-19



**These instructions are for people who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. If you work in a healthcare setting, check with your employer about their guidelines.**

## Why is self-quarantine important?

If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you may be infected even if you feel well.

It can take as few as 2 days to as many as 14 days after being near someone with COVID-19 to feel ill or to know if you are infected. Some people who are infected never have symptoms but can still pass the virus to others.

You should separate yourself from others and stay home (self-quarantine) in case you are infected. This is so you do not spread COVID-19 infection to anyone else.

## What if I have been vaccinated or had COVID-19 before?

If you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past and had a new, recent close contact with someone with COVID-19, you are not required to self-quarantine or get tested if **both** of the following statements are true:

- It has been less than 3 months since you started having symptoms for that infection (or since your positive test date if you did not have symptoms); AND
- You have not had any symptoms since your contact.

Unless **both** above statements are true, you need to self-quarantine and get tested.

If you were vaccinated in the past and had a new, recent contact with someone with COVID-19, you are not required to quarantine or get tested if **both** of the following statements are true:

- You were **fully vaccinated** at the time of your recent contact (2 or more weeks had passed since you received the second dose of a 2-dose vaccine, or one dose of a single-dose vaccine); AND
- You have not had any symptoms since your contact.

Unless **both** above statements are true, you need to self-quarantine and get tested.





**Exceptions:** CDPH guidance on [quarantine for fully vaccinated people](#) does not apply to healthcare settings: follow your employer's and health department's quarantine and testing guideline. Fully vaccinated residents in shared housing or employees in high-density workplaces may still need to get tested.

Whether or not you need to self-quarantine, if you have had recent contact with someone with COVID-19 you must watch for any symptoms for 14 days since your last contact date. (See pages 3 and 4 for how to monitor your health and what to do if you develop any symptoms.) You also must still follow all public health precautions when you leave your home (including wearing a mask, washing hands, and staying at least 6 feet from others, especially those at high risk for serious illness).

### **What is a “close contact”?**

A “close contact” is someone who was near enough to a person with COVID-19 that they may have been infected with the virus.\*

#### **Examples of close contacts:**

- Household member, intimate partner, or caregiver of an infected person.
- Person who was within 6 feet (2 meters) of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more within 24 hours.
- Person who had unprotected contact with an infected person’s body fluids/secretions (e.g., infected person coughed or sneezed on them)

\*A person with COVID-19 is considered able to spread the virus from 2 days before their first symptoms appear until they are no longer required to be self-isolated as described in [Self-isolation Instructions for Individuals Who Have or Likely Have COVID-19](#). A person with a positive COVID-19 test but no symptoms is considered able to spread disease to others starting 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.

### **How long do you need to self-quarantine?**

If you do not develop any symptoms, you will need to stay in self-quarantine for 10 days from the last time you were in close contact with a person who has COVID-19. If you continue to live with or care for this person, the amount of time you have to self-quarantine depends on the type of contact that you have. Please see page 5 to find out more.



## Do you need to get tested for COVID-19 during self-quarantine?

Yes, if you are required to self-quarantine, you should get tested, especially if you have symptoms of COVID-19. To find testing in your area, visit [covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment](https://covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment).

If you were fully vaccinated (see definition on page 1), or you previously tested positive for COVID-19 and it has been less than 3 months since you started having symptoms for that infection (or since your positive test date if you did not have symptoms), then you do not have to get tested as long as you have not had any symptoms since your recent contact.

**Exceptions:** Fully vaccinated employees working in healthcare settings should follow their employer's and health department's testing guideline; and fully vaccinated residents in certain group settings (like a dormitory, group home or a correctional facility) and workers in high-density workplaces may still need to get tested.

### If your test is positive:

- It means you have COVID-19.
- Follow the CDPH self-isolation instructions.
- Tell your close contacts to self-quarantine. You can even tell them anonymously by text or email using the website [tellyourcontacts.org](https://tellyourcontacts.org).

### If your test is negative:

- You may have been infected but it is too early to tell with the test.
- Stay in self-quarantine for 10 days after your last exposure (unless you are fully vaccinated or tested positive for COVID-19 in the past and meet all criteria noted in the section above).
- Check daily for symptoms, wash hands, always wear a mask and stay at least 6 feet from others for 14 days.

### Tips for monitoring your health during self-quarantine:

Stay alert for symptoms of COVID-19. Common symptoms 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, and new loss of taste or smell. This list does not include all possible symptoms.

Check your temperature twice a day. Watch for fever of at least 100.4°F (38°C).

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



Difficulty Breathing



Pressure or pain in chest



Bluish lips or face



Confusion or difficulty waking



Other serious symptoms



## What if you develop COVID-19 symptoms?

### If you develop symptoms, self-isolate and call your healthcare provider.

- Tell them that you were in close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Ask them about getting tested. [Find COVID-19 testing in your area.](#)
- Let them know if you are at [high risk for serious illness](#). You are at high risk if you: are 65 years or older; have a chronic disease (e.g., diabetes); or have a weak immune system.
- Write down when your symptoms started and follow all self-isolation instructions.

### If you have to leave your home for medical care or testing, be careful.

- Wear a mask (see [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#)).
- Use a private vehicle if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, keep as much distance as possible between you and the driver. Wear a mask and leave the windows down if you can. Avoid using public transportation, ride shares, or taxis.

## Self-quarantine Do & Do Nots

### DO!

- **Do stay home** except to get medical care. If you have other health conditions, make sure to closely monitor any new or existing symptoms, and check-in with your doctor, especially if you feel worse.
- **Do stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from others**
- **Do wear a mask** when around others (see [Guidance for Masks](#), linked above, for more information).
- **Do stay away from others in your home** (unless they are also in quarantine) by staying alone in one room. Ventilate spaces with outdoor air if possible.
- **Do stay away from people who are at high risk** for serious illness. People at higher risk are those: 65 years or older; severely overweight; have a chronic disease (e.g., diabetes); or a weak immune system.
- **Do use a separate bathroom**, if available. If that is not possible, [clean and disinfect](#) the bathroom after each use.



- **Do wash your hands often and thoroughly** using 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 a sink is not available, use hand sanitizer (containing 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol). Never use hand sanitizers with methanol because of its high toxicity to both children and adults.
- **Do wipe down surfaces that you touch frequently** with disposable cloths using household cleaners.

### **DO NOT!**

- **Do not go to work, school, or public areas.**
- **Do not allow visitors.**
- **Do not prepare or serve food to others.**

### **Getting help with food and other basic needs:**

- If you do not have someone to help you, you can order food or groceries online for home delivery, if available. Ask that deliveries be left in a safe spot at your door.
- If you need help obtaining food or other essential items, call 2-1-1, your county's Information Line or visit the website [www.211.org](http://www.211.org).
- Additional resources: [financial help](#), [food assistance](#), [housing and homelessness](#), [emotional support](#), [childcare](#), [immigrant communities](#).

### **When can you safely end self-quarantine?**

If you do not develop any symptoms, you may end quarantine after 10 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19, unless you received other instructions from your health department. You must monitor yourself for symptoms, wear a mask at all times around others, wash hands, and stay at least 6 feet from others for 14 days after exposure. If you develop symptoms during this time, self-isolate and contact your medical provider or health department to get tested.

#### **No further contact with someone with COVID-19:**

Your last day in self-quarantine is 10 days from the date when you last had close contact with that person.

Your last close contact with a person with COVID-19 on **May 1**  
**+ 10 days**

= Your last day in self-quarantine is **May 11**



### **Continued contact with someone with COVID-19:**

If you continue to have close contact (like living with or caring for the person), your last day of self-quarantine is 10 days from the date the person started to follow self-isolation instructions.

The person with COVID-19 started to follow self-isolation instructions on **May 5**  
**+ 10 days**

= Your last day in self-quarantine is **May 15**

### **An additional contact with someone with COVID-19:**

The 10-day quarantine period will restart if you have close contact with the person with COVID-19 at any time during your self-quarantine. It will restart on the date of your last close contact.

You started to self-quarantine on **May 10**

You had close contact with a person with COVID-19 on **May 13**  
**+ 10 days**

= Your last day in self-quarantine is **May 23**

### **Cannot avoid close contact with someone with COVID-19:**

Your last day of self-quarantine is 10 days from the date the person with COVID-19 completed their self-isolation. This means they were told by their doctor or local health department it was safe to be near others.

Person with COVID-19 completes self-isolation on **May 15**  
**+ 10 days**

= Your last day in self-quarantine is **May 25**

### **Want more information?**

[Visit the CA Department of Public Health website \(cdph.ca.gov/covid19\)](https://cdph.ca.gov/covid19)

[CDPH Self-Isolation Instructions for Individuals with COVID-19](#)

[CDPH Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

Please 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 Information Line.