

What is isolation?

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Isolation is for people who test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19. You are infectious and can spread the virus to others starting 2 days before you first had symptoms until your isolation period is done. If you never had symptoms, you are infectious starting 2 days before the day you were tested for COVID-19. Anyone who came into close contact with you during this time has been exposed to the virus and should follow quarantine guidelines.

Isolation means:

Even in your own home, you should stay away from other people as much as you can until your isolation is over.



Stay in your house except to get medical care.



Use a different bathroom from other people in your home if you can.



Wear a mask if you need to be around other people.



Stay in a different room from other people in your house.



Clean surfaces that are touched often (phones, doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, sink handles, countertops, and anything metal).



Try not to use the same personal items as other people.

When can I end isolation?

You should isolate until you have been:

- Fever-free for 24 hours (this means you did not use medicine to lower your fever), and
- Your symptoms have improved for 24 hours, and
- It has been at least 5 days from the day your symptoms first started.
- If you did not have symptoms, stay home for 5 days from the day you were tested. If you get sick or develop symptoms, your 5-day isolation at home starts over. Learn more [here](#).

Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others and in public for another 5 more days after you end your isolation at home.

How long do people who live with me need to stay home?

It can be very hard to stay home and miss work or school after being exposed to someone who has COVID-19. It can also be very hard to isolate from people who have COVID-19 and live in your home. That's why the CDC updated their quarantine recommendations and no longer recommends the people who are exposed to you stay home after their exposure. However, anyone who was exposed or lives with you still needs to take precautions:

- Wear a mask for 10 days when around other people or in public.
- Get tested 5 days after they were exposed to you.
- Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 to develop. If they get sick, they need to stay home, follow isolation guidelines, and get tested even if they tested negative before.

If you need medical care.

If your symptoms get worse or you feel like you need medical care, get medical help right away. It is safe to go to the hospital or doctor's office. Wear a mask and let the healthcare workers know you have tested positive for COVID-19.

If you have any of these emergency warning signs*, get medical help right away:



Trouble breathing or shortness of breath



Pain or pressure in your chest that does not go away



Feeling confused or cannot wake up easily



If your lips or face look bluish

*These are not all of the emergency symptoms. Call your doctor if you are worried.

[Medicines](#) are available to help you fight a COVID-19 infection like antiviral pills. These treatments can help keep you from getting severely ill and needing to be hospitalized, but they must be given as soon as possible after your symptoms start. Getting vaccinated is still the best way to prevent COVID-19.