What is quarantine?

Quarantine is for people who may have been exposed to COVID-19, but haven't tested positive or had symptoms yet. It protects others from getting infected without knowing it. Being exposed means you were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 while that person was infectious.

Close contact means:
- You were closer than 6 feet from someone who has the virus for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or longer in a 24 hour period.
- You cared for someone at home who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person who has COVID-19 (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils with the person who has COVID-19.
- The person who has COVID-19 sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

Wear a mask around others.

Everyone who is exposed to COVID-19 should wear a well-fitting mask in public and around others until it has been 10 days since you were exposed. Avoid going to places where it is hard to wear a mask during these 10 days, such as a gym or restaurant.

Do I need to stay home if I am exposed to COVID-19?

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 stay isolated from people who have COVID-19 and live in your home. That's why the CDC updated their quarantine recommendations and no longer recommends people stay home after they are exposed to COVID-19. However, you still need to take precautions to protect other people:

- Wear a mask for 10 days after your exposure when around other people or in public.
- Get tested 5 full days after you were exposed to COVID-19.
- Watch for symptoms of COVID-19. If you get sick, stay home, follow isolation guidelines, and get tested.
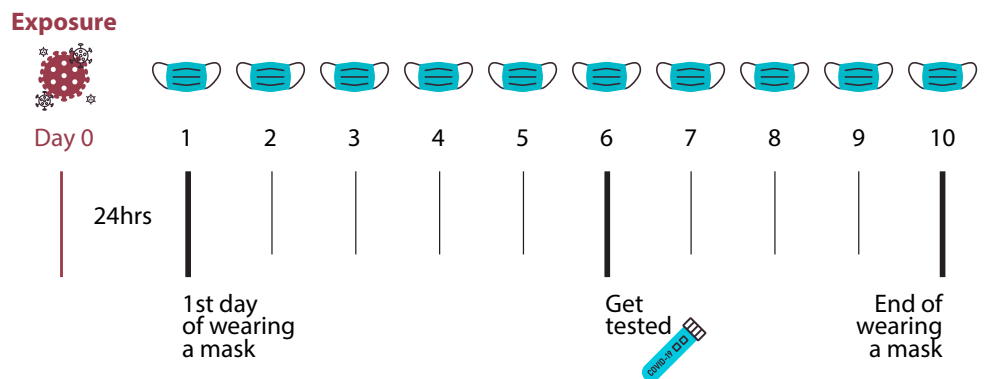
Exposure

Day 0   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10

24hrs

1st day of wearing a mask

Get tested

End of wearing a mask

Image courtesy of Salt Lake County Health Department

Some people may need to quarantine at home because the place where they live or work puts them and others at high risk of COVID-19. People who live or work in a congregate setting like a correctional facility (prison), long-term care facility, or homeless shelter should follow these guidelines from the CDC. Healthcare workers should follow these guidelines from the CDC.

Get tested 5 full days after you were exposed or if you get symptoms of COVID-19.

This lets enough of the virus build up in your body to be detected by the tests. If you test negative at this time, you still need to wear a mask around others and in public until it has been 10 days from the last time you came into close contact with the person who has COVID-19. If you test positive, isolate at home.

Watch for symptoms of COVID-19. Isolate at home and get tested right away if you get sick, even if you tested negative before.

We know there is a chance people can be re-infected with COVID-19. We also know some people can test positive after they have COVID-19 even though they are done with isolation and no longer infectious to other people. The CDC and Utah Department of Health and Human Services recommends you not get tested after an exposure if it's been **less than 90 days** (about 3 months) since you first tested positive for COVID-19, as long as you don't have new or worsening symptoms. However, if you have new or worsening symptoms, use an antigen test and test again.

We also know people who are vaccinated can get COVID-19 , so to be very safe we suggest you get tested 5 days after you were exposed, even if you are vaccinated.