

# 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. *Are you a healthcare worker or essential worker? 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 right now.

It can take as little as 2 days to as many as 14 days after being near someone with COVID-19 to feel any symptoms or know if you are infected. Some people who are infected never have symptoms, but are still contagious to others.

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

## What is a “close contact”?

A “close contact” is anyone who was exposed to a person with COVID-19 while they were contagious\*.

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

*\*A person with COVID-19 is considered to be contagious 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 to be contagious from 2 days before their test was taken until 10 days after their test.*

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

You will need to stay in self-quarantine for 14 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. To assist with determining this, please see [Tips to determine when your self-quarantine ends](#) on Page 4 of these instructions.

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

You may be referred for testing depending on availability in your area.

### If your test is positive:

- ▶ It means you have COVID-19.
- ▶ You should follow the [Self-isolation Instructions for COVID-19](#).
- ▶ You should tell your close contacts to self-quarantine. You can even tell them anonymously by text or email using the website [tellyourcontacts.org](https://www.tellyourcontacts.org).

### If your test is negative:

- ▶ You may have been infected after your last exposure but it is too early to tell on the test.
- ▶ You still need to stay in self-quarantine for the full 14 days after your last exposure.
- ▶ Monitor your health and stay alert for symptoms of COVID-19.

### 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, or 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.

## What if you develop COVID-19 symptoms?

If you develop symptoms that concern you, call your medical provider.

- Tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Ask them about getting tested. To find testing in your area, visit [covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment](https://www.covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment).
- 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 a weak immune system.
- Remember to write down when your symptoms started and follow the [Self-isolation Instructions for Individuals Who Have or Likely Have COVID-19](#).

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

- Wear a facemask or a cloth face covering (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 face covering and leave the windows down if you can. Avoid using public transportation, ride shares, or taxis.

### 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

# Self-quarantine Do & Do Not



## 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 facemask or cloth face covering** when around others (see [Guidance for Cloth Face Coverings](#) for more information).



- **Do stay away from others in your home** (unless they are also in quarantine) by staying alone in a specific room.
- **Do stay away from people who are at [high risk for serious illness](#).** People at higher risk are: 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 not possible, [clean and disinfect](#) the bathroom after 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 due to its high toxicity to both children and adults.



- **Do wipe down surfaces that you touch frequently** with disposable cloths using bleach or 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?

You will need to stay in self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19. The examples below will teach you how to determine the last date in your self-quarantine period.

## Tips to determine when your self-quarantine ends

**No further contact with someone with COVID-19:** Your last day in self-quarantine is 14 days from the date when you last had close contact with that person.

Your last close contact with a person with COVID-19 on **January 1**



**14 days**



Your last day in self-quarantine is **January 15**

**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 14 days from the date the person started to follow [Self-isolation Instructions for Individuals Who Have or Likely Have COVID-19](#)

The person with COVID-19 started to follow self-isolation instructions on **January 5**



**14 days**



Your last day in self-quarantine is **January 19**

**Continued contact with someone with COVID-19:** The 14-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 **January 10**



You had close contact with a person with COVID-19 on **January 13**



**14 days**



Your last day in self-quarantine is **January 27**

**Cannot avoid close contact with someone with COVID-19:** Your last day of self-quarantine is 14 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 **January 15**



**14 days**



Your last day in self-quarantine is **January 29**

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

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.