

Close Contact – CDC Definition

Close Contact through [Proximity and Duration of Exposure](#): Someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting from 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for [discontinuing home isolation](#).

- **Exception:** In the **K-12 indoor classroom** setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were within 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinically compatible illness](#)) if both students [correctly and consistently](#) wore well-fitting [masks](#) the entire time.

This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Public Health Recommendations:

Except in certain circumstances, people who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should [quarantine](#). However, the following people with recent exposure may NOT need to quarantine:

- People who have been [fully vaccinated](#)
- People who were [previously diagnosed with COVID-19](#) within the last three months

Additional Information:

A number of factors can influence a person's risk of exposure to COVID-19, including the [type, proximity, and duration of their exposure](#), environmental factors (such as [crowding](#) and ventilation), [vaccination status](#), [prior COVID-19 infection](#), and [mask use](#).

[Correct](#) and consistent [mask use](#) is a critical step that people can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. However, the [type of masks used](#) and whether they are used consistently and correctly varies throughout the general population. Except in K-12 indoor classroom settings as described above, mask use is not considered when defining a close contact during case investigation and contact tracing, regardless of whether the person diagnosed with COVID-19 or the person exposed to SARS-CoV-2 was wearing a mask. (Note: Exposure risk in the healthcare setting is determined separately and outlined in CDC [guidance](#)).