Frequently Asked Questions
Close Contacts of Confirmed COVID-19 Patients (UPDATED March 29, 2020)

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 can cause symptoms ranging from mild illness, like common cold symptoms, to more serious illness like pneumonia (lung infection).

I've been told I'm a "close-contact" to someone with confirmed COVID-19. What does that mean?

If you are identified as a **close contact** to someone with COVID-19, you may have been told this by your healthcare provider, your employer, your local health department or the person themselves**.** In general, **close contact means being within 6 feet of a person for longer than 10 minutes**. It is currently thought that close contacts of people who have COVID-19 are at higher risk of getting the virus than the general public. **Some examples of close contact include:**

- **Living in the same household and sharing common spaces (bathrooms, kitchen, living spaces, etc.) with a sick person with COVID-19**
- **Caring for a sick person with COVID-19**
- **Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 which could include being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.**

If you have not been a close contact to someone with COVID-19 then you are likely to be at lower risk for infection. However, you should continue to monitor your health for symptoms. If you feel feverish or develop cough or difficulty breathing, you should limit contact with others and seek advice by telephone from a healthcare provider to determine whether medical evaluation is needed.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

The **most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath.** Other symptoms *may* include a runny nose, sore throat, symptoms of upset stomach or generally feeling unwell.

What if I'm a close contact to someone with COVID-19 but I'm not sick and I don't have symptoms?

You should stay in self-quarantine at home and monitor your health for fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. **You should not go to work or school and should avoid public places during this time period.** If the **person with COVID-19 lives in your home, do your best to separate yourself from them** until they are taken off their home isolation instructions. If you cannot separate yourself from them and continue to have close contact then you will need to remain at home and self-quarantined for 14 days after the person with COVID-19 is released from their home isolation.

What if I have these symptoms?

If, **during this 14-day period**, **you get sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath (even if your symptoms are very mild), you should isolate yourself at home and stay away from other people**. If you feel you need additional medical evaluation or have any of **the following conditions that may increase**

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your risk for a serious infection —age 60 years or over, are pregnant, or have medical conditions— contact your physician's office and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19. If you need to see a healthcare provider, call ahead to the office and tell them you were a close contact to someone with COVID-19. If you experience a medical emergency and need to call an ambulance, dial 9-1-1 and alert dispatch that you are a close contact to a person with COVID-19 and are currently under quarantine.

For close contacts who have been tested but not in the hospital:

What if I have symptoms and have been tested but I don't have the results yet?

If have symptoms and you've been tested but don't have the results you **should remain in home isolation and separate yourself from others until you receive your results**. This includes eliminating close contact with others in the house, not traveling or attending public gatherings, and not leaving home except to seek medical care. Practice good hand hygiene and **clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks, phones).** Depending on your results follow the additional guidance below.

What if I tested negative, but still feel sick?

If you test negative for COVID-19 but still have symptoms, it is likely you may have another respiratory virus. You should continue to follow similar guidance to isolate yourself from others, practice good hand hygiene and clean and disinfect surfaces in the home. **You should not return to work or school until 72 hours after your fever has ended without the use of fever-reducing medications and your other symptoms have improved.**

What if I test positive for COVID-19?

If you test positive for COVID-19, don't panic. Many people who have COVID-19 have mild illness and can be managed at home without needing to be in the hospital or receive additional care. Your healthcare provider may contact you to ask additional questions. **You may be contacted by your local health department to interview you about where you may have gone and who may have had close contact with you while you were ill.** This information will be helpful to them in determining if others around you should be evaluated for COVID-19 and should seek care. **After your diagnosis you will be asked to isolate yourself at home until 7 days after you first developed symptoms AND 72 hours (3 days) after your fever has ended without the use of fever-reducing medications and your symptoms have significantly improved (whichever period is longer).** If you have trouble figuring out when to stop isolation, contact your local health department or your healthcare provider. **If you are in home isolation and your symptoms are worsening**, contact your healthcare provider and seek advice. **If you are under home isolation, experience a medical emergency, and need to call an ambulance**, dial 9-1-1 and alert dispatch that you have tested positive for COVID-19 and are currently isolating at home.

For close contacts who have NOT been tested:

What if I'm a close contact but don't meet the criteria for testing?

If you aren't tested but still have symptoms, it is possible you may have COVID-19 or another respiratory virus. You should continue to isolate yourself from others, practice good hand hygiene and clean and disinfect surfaces in the home. **If you or your healthcare provider have a high suspicion of COVID-19,** you may be advised to **follow the same home-isolation guidance as people who test positive for COVID-19 (see above).**