CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

Isolate If You Are Sick

Separate yourself from others if you have COVID-19

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Isolation is used to separate people infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from people who are not infected.

People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. In the home, anyone sick or infected should separate themselves from others by staying in a specific "sick room" or area and using a separate bathroom (if available).

Isolation or Quarantine: What's the difference?

Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others.

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

Who needs to isolate?	People who have COVID-19 • People who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to recover at home • People who have no symptoms (are asymptomatic) but have tested positive for infection with SARS-CoV-2
Steps to take	**Stay home except to get medical care** • Monitor your symptoms. If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately • Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible • Use a separate bathroom, if possible • Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets • Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils • Wear a mask when around other people, if you are able to Learn more about what to do if you are sick.

Confirmed and suspected cases of reinfection of the virus that causes COVID-19

Cases of reinfection of COVID-19 have been reported but are rare. In general, reinfection means a person was infected (got sick) once, recovered, and then later became infected again. Based on what we know from similar viruses, some reinfections are expected.

When you can be around others after you had or likely had COVID-19

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations.

Find CDC's recommendations for your situation below.

I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms

You can be with others after

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation

If you had severe illness from COVID-19 (you were admitted to a hospital and needed oxygen), your healthcare provider may recommend that you stay in isolation for longer than 10 days after your symptoms first appeared (possibly up to 20 days) and you may need to finish your period of isolation at home.

I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after:

- 10 days have passed since the date you had your positive test

If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for "I think or know I had COVID, and I had symptoms."

I had COVID-19 or I tested positive for COVID-19 and I have a weakened immune system

If you have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication, you might need to stay home and isolate longer than 10 days. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

Your doctor may work with an infectious disease expert at your local health department to determine when you can be around others.

Getting testing again for COVID-19

If you have recovered from your symptoms after testing positive for COVID-19, you may continue to test positive for three months or more without being contagious to others. For this reason, you should be tested only if you develop new symptoms of possible COVID-19. Getting tested again should be discussed with your healthcare provider, especially if you have been in close contact with another person who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

If you have symptoms and test positive for COVID-19, follow the guidance above for "I think or know I had COVID, and I had symptoms." Your doctor may work with an infectious disease expert at your local health department to determine when you can be around others.

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