

Close Contact or Exposure to COVID-19

10/6/2022

You can spread COVID-19 to others starting a couple days before you have any symptoms, and even if you never have symptoms. If you spend time close to someone with COVID-19, you may have it too, but you may not know it. It is important to take the recommended steps to keep from spreading the virus to others, even if you have been vaccinated or have already had COVID-19.

People who live or work in certain high-risk settings may have different guidance they need to follow after an exposure. Refer to setting-specific recommendations below.

If you get symptoms, stay home and away from others (isolate) as soon you notice them and [test \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) right away for COVID-19. This includes people who are vaccinated or who had COVID-19 in the past. For more information, refer to [If You Are Sick or Test Positive: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).

Definitions

Close contact or exposure: Being close to someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes within 24 hours means you are a close contact and were exposed to COVID-19. However, it may be possible for COVID-19 to spread in less time, or it may take longer.

- Visit [CDC: Understanding Exposure Risks \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/risks-exposure.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/risks-exposure.html) to learn about factors that make spread of COVID-19 more or less likely after you were around a person with COVID-19.
- In general, the longer you are around someone who has COVID-19, the more likely it is that COVID-19 could spread to you. This is especially true if other steps to prevent spread are not in place, such as wearing a mask. Your risk may be higher if you were around a person who had symptoms, or you live with someone who has COVID-19. The type of activity can also increase your risk, such as singing or shouting.

Isolation: Staying home and away from others when you test positive, feel sick, or have symptoms of COVID-19. This will help to keep you from spreading COVID-19 to other people.

High-quality and well-fitting mask: A well-fitting mask is one that fits snugly over your nose, mouth, and chin and does not have gaps around the edges. For information on high quality masks, refer to [types of masks \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html#type\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html#type).

Immunocompromised: A person with a weakened immune system. The immune system is how the body fights disease.

After exposure to someone who has COVID-19



Wear a high quality and well-fitting mask for 10 full days when you are indoors and around others, even at home. The 10 days start the day after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19. The day of your last close contact is counted as day zero. The day you can stop wearing a mask is day 11.

Watch for symptoms for 10 full days after your last close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Symptoms can include fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater, cough, sore throat, or shortness of breath. For a complete list of symptoms, visit [CDC: Symptoms of COVID-19 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html).

- If you develop symptoms, stay home and away from others (isolate) and test immediately for COVID-19. Follow isolation recommendations at [If You Are Sick or Test Positive: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html). This includes people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days, even if they are up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Test on day six, if possible

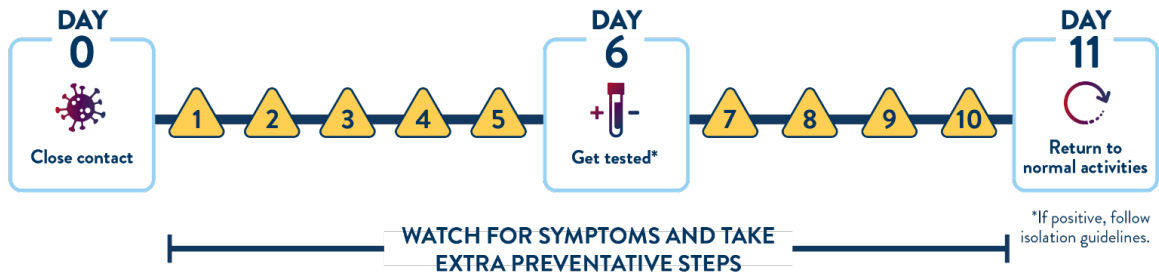
- If you test positive, stay at home (isolate), and follow recommendations at [If You Are Sick or Test Positive: COVID-19](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).
- If you test negative, continue to wear a high-quality and well-fitting mask when indoors and around others.
- Visit [COVID-19 Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for detailed information about where you can get tested and what kinds of tests are available.

Things to avoid

- Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe disease and settings where people at higher risk live or gather, such as long-term care facilities. If this is not possible, take extra precautions to [protect yourself and others \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html). For information on people at higher risk, refer to [CDC: People with Certain Medical Conditions \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html).
- Avoid travel. If you must travel, wear a high-quality and well-fitting mask.
- Avoid places where you need to remove your mask (e.g., gyms, restaurants).

Specific considerations or exceptions

People who cannot wear a mask



Masks are not recommended for children aged 2 years and younger, and people with some disabilities or medical conditions may not be able to wear a mask. If a person who is not able to wear a mask is exposed to COVID-19, follow all other recommended steps, including testing on day 6 (and right away if symptoms develop), and take additional steps to prevent transmission to others, such as improving ventilation and keeping distance from others. Remember to avoid people whose bodies have trouble fighting off illness (immunocompromised) or are at high risk of severe disease and settings where people at higher risk live or gather, such as long-term care facilities.

People who had COVID-19 in the past 30 days



If you had COVID-19 in the past 30 days, testing is not recommended after an exposure unless you develop symptoms. This means, if you don't have symptoms, you don't need to test at day 6. If you develop symptoms, refer to [If You Are Sick or Test Positive: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html). For more information on testing for people who had COVID-19 in the past, visit [CDC: Choosing a COVID-19 Test \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html#choosing-a-test\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html#choosing-a-test).

If someone in your home has COVID-19



If you live with someone who has COVID-19, wear a high-quality and well-fitting mask during the ill person's isolation period. Continue to wear a mask for 10 additional days after the ill person's isolation period ends. Count the last day of their isolation as day zero. Follow other guidance above for wearing masks, watching for symptoms, testing, and avoiding people at high risk of severe disease.

For more information on this guidance, visit [CDC: What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/if-you-were-exposed.html).

Setting-specific recommendations

These recommendations do not apply to certain high-risk settings. For guidance on isolation or exposures in health care settings or other high-risk group (congregate) settings:

- People who live or work in health care or long-term care facilities and are exposed to COVID-19 should follow [Health Care Worker Isolation and Quarantine Recommendations \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/exposure.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/exposure.html).
- People who live or work in group living and care facilities, such as homeless shelters or correctional facilities, and are exposed to COVID-19 should follow [Congregate Settings and Care Facilities: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/communities.html).
- Businesses, facilities, or other private settings are encouraged to follow Minnesota Department of Health and CDC guidance, at a minimum. They may also choose to require longer stay-at-home periods or longer mask-wearing periods after being around someone who has COVID-19.



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