

# Health Care Workers with Higher-risk Exposure to COVID-19

2/17/2022

You are getting this information sheet because you are a health care worker and you spent time close to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. This exposure was higher-risk because it happened while: being with coworkers or caring for patients or residents at work without recommended personal protective equipment (PPE); or while spending time with people in your community or household. Because of this higher-risk exposure you may be at risk of COVID-19 infection.

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) has the following information and recommendations for you.

## Quarantine from work and the community

Quarantine recommendations depend on whether you were up to date on all recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine at the time of your close contact. For details about recommended doses of vaccine, visit [CDC: Stay Up to Date with Your Vaccines \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html).

### If you were up to date with recommended doses of COVID-19 vaccine:

- You do not need to quarantine from work or the community, as long as the following is true:
  - You currently have no symptoms of COVID-19.
  - You do not have a medical condition that could impact how well your immune system responds to COVID-19 vaccine.
- Get tested immediately, but no sooner than 24 hours after your exposure. If the first test is negative, get tested again five to seven days after the exposure. If you have ongoing close contact with a household member who has COVID-19 and is staying home and away from others (isolation), consider getting tested every three to seven days until the family member's at-home isolation period ends.
- Call your employer or regular health care provider to schedule an appointment for testing, or [Find Testing Locations \(mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/index.jsp).
- When returning to work after your exposure, continue to wear recommended PPE. Wear a mask for 10 full days any time you are around others, including in your home.

### If you were unvaccinated or were not up to date with recommended COVID-19 vaccinations:

- Stay home, including from work. Wear a mask for 10 full days any time you are around others, including in your home.
  - Do not go to work for 10 days after your last exposure to the person with COVID-19 or seven days, as long as you test negative and the test sample is collected within 48 hours of your planned return to work.

- You may be asked to return to work sooner than usual to fill staff shortages. Refer to the [Returning to work](#) section below for more information.
- Watch for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 full days after your last exposure. If signs or symptoms develop at any time, get tested and stay home and away from others (isolate).
- You are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated. If you decide to get vaccinated in the future, talk to your health care provider or employer about how to do that.
- You should not start the vaccine series if you are currently in a 10-day quarantine. You may get a second dose during this time if you already had the first dose, but you and your vaccine provider should be careful to reduce the possibility of spreading COVID-19.

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## Returning to work

If your employer does not have enough staff, they may determine they are in a contingency or crisis staffing situation. **If you are not sick**, your employer can ask you to return to work earlier than is recommended in normal (conventional) staffing situations. Additional testing may be recommended if you return to work early.

It is your right to choose whether to stay home or to return to work before completing quarantine. Minnesota law provides employment protections for a person who stays away from work due to a health department recommendation. Refer to [Minnesota Statutes, Section 144.4196 \(www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/144.4196\)](http://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/144.4196) for information on employee protections.

If you return to work during your quarantine period, you should wear a well-fitting medical-grade face mask (not a cloth mask) or respirator at work at all times, including when providing care and when within 6 feet of any other person.

You should consider doing a mid-shift self-assessment for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 when returning to work early, during a quarantine period.

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## More resources

More details about isolation and quarantine for health care workers:

- [CDC: Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html)
- [Health Care Worker Isolation and Quarantine Recommendations \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/exposure.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/exposure.html)

Questions? Call MDH at 651-201-5414, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and choose the option that says you are a health care provider or clinician.



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