

With a rise in Covid positive cases, here is some recent guidance directly from the CDC regarding quarantines and isolation. Free Covid tests can be ordered at <https://www.covid.gov/tests>. Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional 4 free at-home tests beginning November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of 8 tests.

Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19

[If you were exposed](#) to COVID-19, you should start taking precautions.
Isolation & Exposure

If you have COVID-19, you can spread the virus to others. There are precautions you can take to prevent spreading it to others: isolation, masking, and avoiding contact with [people who are at high risk of getting very sick](#). Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.

These recommendations do not change based on [COVID-19 hospital admission levels](#). If you have COVID-19, also see additional information on [treatments](#) that may be available to you.

This information is intended for a general audience. Healthcare professionals should see [Ending Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19](#). This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—not replace—any federal, state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations.

When to Isolate

Regardless of vaccination status, you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19.

You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have [test](#) results. If your results are positive, follow the full

isolation recommendations below. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.

IF YOU TEST Negative, you can end your isolation

IF YOU TEST Positive, follow the full isolation recommendations below

When you have COVID-19, isolation is counted in days, as follows:

If you had no symptoms

- Day 0 is the day you were tested (not the day you received your positive test result)
- Day 1 is the first full day following the day you were tested
- If you develop [symptoms](#) within 10 days of when you were tested, the clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset

If you had symptoms

- Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset, regardless of when you tested positive
- Day 1 is the first full day after the day your [symptoms](#) started

Isolation

If you test positive for COVID-19, stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home.

You are likely most infectious during these first 5 days. Wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others at home and in public. Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see CDC's [Travel webpage](#). [Do not travel](#). Stay home and separate from others as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if possible. Take steps to [improve ventilation](#) at home, if possible. Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils. Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (like trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately. Learn more about [what to do if you have COVID-19](#).

Ending Isolation

End isolation based on how serious your COVID-19 symptoms were. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

- If you had no symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5.
- If you had symptoms and your symptoms are improving, you may end isolation after day 5 if you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- If you had symptoms and your symptoms are not improving, continue to isolate until you are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication) and your symptoms are improving.
- If you had symptoms and had Moderate illness (you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing), you need to isolate through day 10.
- If you had symptoms and had Severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system, you need to isolate through day 10 and consult your doctor before ending isolation. Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you.

If you are unsure if your symptoms are moderate or severe or if you have a weakened immune system, talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Regardless of when you end isolation, until at least day 11:

- Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking (see below).
- For travel guidance, see CDC's [Travel webpage](#).

Removing Your Mask

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving), wear your

mask through day 10 OR if you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

Note: If your antigen test results are positive, you may still be infectious. You should continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test. Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean you need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.

What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19

If you have tested positive or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, [isolate immediately](#).

About Being Exposed to COVID-19

Isolation & Exposure

If you were exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 or have been told by a healthcare provider or public health authority that you were exposed, here are the steps that you should take, regardless of your vaccination status or if you have had a previous infection. Learn how COVID-19 spreads and the [factors that make risk of spread higher or lower](#).

After Being Exposed to COVID-19

START PRECAUTIONS Immediately

Wear a [mask](#) as soon as you find out you were exposed
Start counting from Day 1

- Day 0 is the day of your last exposure to someone with COVID-19
- Day 1 is the first full day after your last exposure

CONTINUE PRECAUTIONS for 10 Full Days

You can still develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed

Take precautions by wearing a high-quality [mask](#) or respirator (e.g., N95) any time you are around others inside your home or indoors in public [1](#)

Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see CDC's [Travel](#) webpage.

Take [extra precautions](#) if you will be around people who are [more likely to get very sick from COVID-19](#).

[More about how to protect yourself and others](#)

Watch for symptoms

- fever (100.4°F or greater)
- cough
- shortness of breath
- [other COVID-19 symptoms](#)

If you develop symptoms

- [isolate immediately](#)
- [get tested](#)
- stay home until you know the result

If your test result is positive, follow the [isolation recommendations](#).

GET TESTED at Day 6

Get tested at least 5 full days after your last exposure. Test even if you don't develop symptoms. If you already had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, see [specific testing recommendations](#).

IF YOU TEST Negative, continue taking precautions through day 10. Wear a high-quality mask when around others at home and indoors in public. You can still develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed.

IF YOU TEST Positive, [isolate immediately](#)

*About negative test results

As noted in the Food and Drug Administration labeling for authorized over-the-counter antigen tests, negative test results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions.