

# COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation

## Frequently Asked Questions for Parents or Guardians

### I've heard the words isolation and quarantine. What is the difference and how do I know what to do?

- **Quarantine:** When a person who was a close contact of someone who is sick, or has tested positive for COVID-19, stays home and watches for symptoms to see if they will become sick.
  - A 14-day quarantine period is recommended. Quarantine may end after 10 days if they have shown no symptoms and continue to monitor for the full 14 days.
  - There is still a risk of getting sick between days 11-14, it is simply lower than the first 10 days.
  - Schools or childcare facilities may still require and enforce a 14-day quarantine period. Please follow your school or childcare facility's guidance.
- **Isolation:** When a person that is sick stays home and away from others to prevent the spread of illness.
  - A person with COVID-19 should isolate for a minimum of 10 days after starting to feel sick or 10 days after a positive test if they have no symptoms. Isolation should only end when a person's symptoms are improving (from their worst) and when they have gone 24 hours without vomiting, diarrhea and without a fever (without taking medicine to stop a fever).
- **Close Contact:** Someone who has
  - had face-to-face contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 cumulative minutes or more) with someone who has COVID-19 while they were contagious, with or without masks or protective barriers.
  - possibly come in contact with a sick person's droplets (coughing, sneezing or singing). May have had direct physical contact with a person who has COVID-19 (hugging, kissing or contact during high-impact sports) or shared eating or drinking utensils with a person who has COVID-19.

### My child was told to quarantine. What does this mean?

Your child is a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 and should be watched at home to see if they become sick.

- Keep your child at home unless they need to see a doctor or there is an emergency like a fire or flood.
- Track your child's health. Make note of any symptoms your child starts to have on a calendar.
- Try to keep household members as separate as possible. Use masks inside and keep at least 6ft. distance when possible.
- When one household member is in quarantine, the other members can still go to school or work. If they did not have close contact with the sick person, they are not considered at risk of getting the virus (unless the person in quarantine becomes sick).

### What symptoms should I watch my child for?

People with COVID-19 may have different symptoms. **Some people may have very mild symptoms or show no symptoms at all.** Common symptoms of COVID-19 could include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of smell or taste
- Fever
- Chills
- Body or Muscle Aches
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Severe Tiredness or Fatigue
- Congestion or Runny Nose



### My child has started to show symptoms of COVID-19. What now?

- When children get sick, it's important to keep them safe. Let their doctor know they are having symptoms of COVID-19 in case you need to call them later, but do not take them in without calling ahead.

- Other household members should now practice quarantine measures, so they should stop going to work or school and start tracking their symptoms on a calendar.
- Your child should now be isolated (kept away) from other household members as much as possible. See the red box below for details.

## COVID-19 Testing

### My child has no symptoms. Should they get tested?

Testing is recommended, but not required. Ask your doctor or testing site for a non-rapid nasal or saliva molecular (PCR) test for the most reliable results. The best time to be tested is between 7-10 days after exposure to COVID-19. *If your child begins to show symptoms, they should get tested.*

### My child tested negative. Can they end quarantine early?

**No.** You cannot test out of quarantine. Symptoms can start anywhere between 2 and 14 days after exposure to COVID-19. To be safe, we recommend your child quarantine for 14 days after their exposure. They may end quarantine after 10 days if they have not had any symptoms, and you continue to watch for symptoms the full 14-day period.

## My child is young and needs me to take care of them, how do we stay safe?

- Not every family has the space or ability to separate from one another. See our red box below on how to be as safe as possible if someone in your home is sick.

## My doctor said that my child does not need to quarantine.

- If your child is a close contact of a person who has COVID-19, it is required for them to stay home and quarantine for a minimum of 10 days, and monitor for symptoms for 14 days, in case they become sick.

## What if I can't take time off work to stay home with my child?

- The Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) can provide you with a letter to give to your employer. If you are not able to work because someone you are caring for has to quarantine because of COVID-19, you may be able to get paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act Paid Sick Leave Program.

## What do I do if my child tests positive or has symptoms of COVID-19?

A COVID-19 positive child must isolate at home and away from others. This means:

- **Stay home** from school or work
- Sleep in a room by themselves and, if possible, use a separate bathroom
- Stay 6 feet away from household members whenever possible
- Wear a mask when sharing common spaces with other household members
- Do not have physical contact with household members (hugs, kisses, playing together) and must not share eating utensils or cups/bottles
- Do not leave the home except if they need medical care or in case of an emergency, and should always wear a fabric mask or cloth covering the nose and mouth if leaving the home

Parents or guardians of a COVID-19 positive child should:

- Wipe down all frequently touched surfaces with a disinfectant spray or cleaner
- Keep track of symptoms daily (on a piece of paper or calendar) and note when they start or stop
- Have all close contacts or household members **stay home** from work or school, begin to watch for symptoms, and quarantine for a minimum of 10 days and monitor for symptoms for 14 days from the last date of exposure

**A WCHD Case Investigator may not reach out to you right away. Please follow these instructions until you are contacted by the health department, or your child meets the criteria for ending isolation.**