

Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19

3/24/2021

This guidance is for people in Minnesota to understand how to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated recommendations for quarantine. Information can be found at [Close Contacts and Tracing: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/close.html).

Quarantine – or separating oneself from others – is recommended for people who have been close to a person with COVID-19 (an exposure). Since people with COVID-19 become contagious before symptoms start or may have no symptoms at all, quarantine is an important way to keep COVID-19 from spreading. To protect family, other close contacts, and the community, a person who has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 must stay home and away from others (quarantine), get tested, and watch themselves for symptoms, such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell.

Who needs to quarantine?

- People who were within 6 feet of someone contagious with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more over the course of a day (24 hours).
- People who live in the same household as someone with COVID-19.
- People who had direct physical or intimate contact (e.g., kissing, hugging, other types of physical contact) with a person who is sick with COVID-19.
- People who provide care for a person who is sick with COVID-19 at home.
- People with direct exposure to respiratory droplets from a person contagious with COVID-19.
- People who have traveled outside of Minnesota, other than crossing the border for work, study, medical care, or personal safety and security. For more information, see [Protect Yourself and Others: Traveling \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#travel\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#travel).

Who does not need to quarantine?

If someone has recovered from COVID-19 in the past 90 days and is exposed again, they do not need to quarantine if **ALL** of the following are true:

- Their illness was laboratory confirmed in the past 90 days.
- They have fully recovered.

- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.

If someone has completed COVID-19 vaccination (two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series) and is exposed, they do not need to quarantine if **ALL** of the following are true:

- The COVID-19 exposure was at least 14 days after their vaccination series was fully completed.
- They do not currently have any symptoms of COVID-19.

People who live or work in a health care or long-term care facility, have been vaccinated, and have a COVID-19 exposure should refer to [COVID-19 Recommendations for Health Care Workers \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf).

Even after a person has recovered from COVID-19 or is fully vaccinated they should still continue to stay distanced, wear a mask that fits well, wash their hands often, and follow other precautions. For more information, see [CDC: When to Quarantine \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html).

How to quarantine

- Stay home for 14 days after the exposure ended. This is the best strategy to minimize the spread of COVID-19 to others.
 - Do not go to work, school, or any other place outside the home.
 - Do not invite guests from outside your household into your home.
 - In some specific situations, there may be options to shorten the quarantine period. See **Options to reduce quarantine in specific situations** below.
- Separate from other people in your home and monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell. If symptoms develop, contact a health care provider and get tested for COVID-19.
- Stay away from people who are at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults, those living in long-term care facilities, and people with health conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, severe obesity, and weakened immune systems.
- Get tested for COVID-19 five days or later after the exposure, even if you do not have symptoms. If test results are positive, follow recommendations on [Information for Confirmed Cases and Contacts \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/cases.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/cases.html).
- When quarantining at home, you must make sure to:
 - Stay in a specific room and separate from others in the home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
 - Wear a facemask if other people are around.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

- Wash hands thoroughly and often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as food, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding. After using these items, wash thoroughly with soap and water.
- Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing (such as Uber or Lyft), or taxis.

How long to quarantine for COVID-19

A 14-day quarantine period is recommended in any of the following situations:

- The person lives in the same household and is a contact of someone with COVID-19.
 - The 14-day quarantine period starts the day after the person with COVID-19 completes their isolation period (usually 10 days from the day their symptoms started, or if they didn't have symptoms, 10 days from the day they got tested. See: [How Long to Stay Home \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html#stayhome\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html#stayhome)).
 - If multiple people in the home have COVID-19, the 14 days start after the last person has completed their isolation. This may mean that other household members will need to quarantine for 24 days or more.
- The person lives or works in a congregate living situation, including a long-term care facility, correctional facility, homeless shelter, or other setting where people cannot quarantine individually and where they can expose multiple people, including those at high risk of severe disease.
- The person works in a health care setting, see: [COVID-19 Recommendations for Health Care Workers \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf).

Options to reduce quarantine in specific situations

A 14-day quarantine *remains* the CDC's recommendation for the greatest protection against spreading virus that causes COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2. However, CDC has reviewed data and modeled the impact of a number of options for shortening quarantine.

Because people can develop COVID-19 up to 14 days after an exposure, any quarantine shorter than 14 days might lead to increased spread of the virus in the community. However, in some situations quarantine can negatively affect income, education, and other health conditions of exposed people. CDC provides options to reduce the length of quarantine for state health departments to consider. These options are to balance reducing the impact on people and society with the potential for the virus to spread. Reducing quarantine and the impact on the person is also expected to increase compliance with recommended quarantine duration.

CDC has published additional detail on reduced quarantine, including estimates of the post-quarantine transmission risk, on their website: [CDC: Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with](#)

[SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html).

Please note that these changes are not universal. Some workplaces and settings may have different quarantine requirements.

A shortened quarantine period may be considered if ALL of the following are true:

- The person has NOT had symptoms of COVID-19 during the quarantine period.
- The person does NOT live with someone who has COVID-19.
- The person does NOT live or work in a high-risk setting, including a long-term care or assisted living facility, correctional facility, shelter, or other congregate living facility.
- The person does NOT work in a health care facility.
- The person had a defined exposure, meaning a known exposure with a beginning and an end. Examples could be someone who was exposed:
 - At school or a sporting activity.
 - During a shift at work or while on break.
 - At a social gathering or event, like a party or funeral.
 - Note: For someone who is under quarantine after traveling outside of Minnesota for reasons other than crossing the border for work, study, medical care, or personal safety and security, the “exposure” period ends upon arrival back home.

If and only if all of the above conditions are true, quarantine may be shortened to:

- 10 days without testing; or
- Seven days with a PCR-negative test (not an antigen test or antibody/blood test) **if** the test occurred on day five after exposure or later.

After stopping quarantine:

- Wear a mask, stay 6 feet from others, wash hands, and avoid crowds or settings with people who are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19.
- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure. If any symptoms occur, isolate from others right away and get tested.

Determining date that quarantine ends

To determine when the quarantine period will end, identify the last date of exposure to someone with COVID-19. This is considered day zero. The next day is the first full day of quarantine, or day one. People are able to resume normal activities the day after their quarantine period is completed.

- A 14-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day 15.
- A 10-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day 11.

- A seven-day quarantine means the person can resume activities on day eight.

Additional resources

For people who have or develop symptoms, see [If You Are Sick: COVID-19](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).

To find testing, visit [COVID-19 Testing](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html).

For information on well-fitting masks, visit [CDC: Improve the Fit and Filtration of Your Mask to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/mask-fit-and-filtration.html) (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/mask-fit-and-filtration.html).

For more information on COVID-19 from the Minnesota Department of Health, see [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html) (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html).



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