

What to do if you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19

When someone tests positive for COVID-19, it is important to notify their close contacts to help keep COVID-19 from spreading. Close contact means being within 6 feet, for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, of someone with COVID-19 during their infectious period.

The infectious period is when the person with COVID-19 is contagious. It starts two days before symptoms began and continues until [they are recovered](#). For people who haven't had symptoms, the infectious period starts two days before they had a positive test.

If you are a close contact or think you had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, immediately begin following the testing and quarantine guidance below. You may find out that you are a close contact from the person who tested positive, the Health Department (a text message from 89361 or a phone call), your employer, your college, your child's school, your health care provider, or another place you went to recently.

Do I need to get tested?

If you are unvaccinated:

- The Health Department recommends that you get tested twice – as soon as two days after you were exposed to the person with COVID-19, and again seven days after the exposure.
- If your first test is negative, remain in quarantine and follow the quarantine guidance on the next page. If it is positive, [begin isolation immediately](#).
- Stay at home and away from other people while you wait for your test results – especially anyone who is unvaccinated, at [increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#), or lives with someone who is at increased risk.

If you are unvaccinated and have recovered from COVID-19 within the past three months:

- Testing is not recommended if you do not have symptoms of COVID-19.
- If you do have symptoms, talk to your health care provider for next steps.

If you are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms of COVID-19:

- You are well protected from COVID-19 once you are fully vaccinated. If you'd like reassurance, consider getting tested 3 to 5 days after you were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

If you are fully vaccinated and you have symptoms of COVID-19:

- If you develop **any** symptoms within 14 days of being exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should get tested. COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective, but occasionally people who are fully vaccinated can get COVID-19. Most often your symptoms will be mild. Being vaccinated protects you from severe illness, hospitalization and death.

- Stay at home and away from other people while you wait for your test results – especially anyone who is unvaccinated, at [increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19](#), or lives with someone who is at increased risk.

[Find a free COVID-19 test](#)

Do I need to quarantine?

Close contacts will need to quarantine (see exceptions below). Quarantine means staying home and away from others for 14 days. Your quarantine period starts on day 0, which was the last day you were in close contact with the person who tested positive.

You do not need to quarantine if you do **not** have symptoms of COVID-19, **and**:

- you are fully vaccinated, unless you are an inpatient or resident in a health care setting, **or**
- you have recovered from COVID-19 within the past three months, **or**
- you had close contact with someone who is a close contact (for example, you live with someone or take care of someone who is in quarantine).

How do I quarantine?

Here's what you need to do to quarantine:

- Day 0 is the day you were last in contact with the person who has COVID-19.
- Stay home, except to get tested, for urgent medical care, or if you feel unsafe at home. [Wear a mask](#) if you need to leave home.
- Call ahead before visiting a health care provider or emergency department and tell them you are quarantining because you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.
- Watch for symptoms, even if mild, of cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
- If possible, stay in a specific room in your home and use a separate bathroom.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from others in your home at all times.
- Wear a mask if you're in any room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing.
- Don't share household items.

Daily cleaning and washing:

- [Clean and disinfect surfaces](#) in your home. As much as possible, if you are staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom, clean them yourself, and have someone else clean the other areas of the home.
- Thoroughly wash household items, like utensils, after using them.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

If at any point you start to feel sick or you develop symptoms:

- Call your health care provider right away. Let them know you are quarantining at home because you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19. If you don't have a health care provider, call 2-1-1 to be connected to care, or contact the nearest [federally qualified health center](#) or one of [Vermont's free & referral clinics](#).
- If you're having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the hospital.
- If you have mild illness, treat your symptoms at home by getting plenty of rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and taking fever-reducing medication if needed.
- If you test positive for COVID-19, begin isolation immediately. Find out [what to do if you test positive for COVID-19](#).

When to get medical care immediately:

Get medical care immediately if you have trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or changes in color on your lips, gums, face, around the eyes, or nails. Tell your health care provider or 9-1-1 that you are quarantining at home because you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

When you can end quarantine:

You can end quarantine after 14 days if you don't get sick.

You have the **option to end quarantine early** if you:

- get tested on or after day 7 and get a negative test result. The test should be for a current infection (like a PCR test), except it should not be an antigen test (also known as a rapid test), **and**
- did not have any symptoms of COVID-19. You must continue to monitor yourself for symptoms for the full 14 days.

If you are an unvaccinated inpatient or an unvaccinated resident of a long-term care facility, you do not have the option to test out of quarantine early.