

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19): FAQs about Exposure, Illness, and Isolation

I've been exposed to COVID-19. Now what?

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many species of animals. In rare cases, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread from person to person. This is the case with COVID-19. Symptoms can range from mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. In some cases, symptoms do not appear—but the virus can still be spread to others.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#How-COVID-19-Spreads>

How is COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#How-COVID-19-Spreads>

What should I do if I had close contact with someone with COVID-19?

If you are a household member, intimate partner, or an individual who has been within six feet of a person with symptomatic COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time, take the following steps:

- Stay at home until 14 days after the last exposure, and practice strict social distancing (maintain at least six feet of space from others at all times).
- Monitor your symptoms by checking your temperature twice a day. Watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- Avoid contact with people who are at higher risk for severe illness (unless they live in the same home and had same exposure).

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

What if I get sick?

What should I do if I have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and I get sick?

CDC recommends:

- Staying at home, except to get medical care.
- Separating yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- Monitoring your symptoms.
- Calling ahead before visiting your doctor.
- Wearing a cloth covering over your nose and mouth if you are sick.
- Covering your coughs and sneezes.

- Cleaning your hands often.
- Avoiding sharing personal household items.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces daily.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

When should I seek medical attention?

Most people who get COVID-19 have mild symptoms and can recover at home. If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Trouble breathing
- Continued pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Not able to wake up or stay awake
- Lips or face turning blue

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency. Notify the operator that you have, or think you might have, COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html#warning-signs>

I have been told to isolate at home. When is it safe to end home isolation?

If you have COVID-19 and have symptoms, you may end home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least three days have passed since recovery (defined as fever ending without the use of fever-reducing medications), **and**
- You have experienced improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **and**
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

If you have COVID-19 and have not had any symptoms, you may end home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, **and**
- No subsequent symptoms have emerged.

There are also test-based strategies for determining when it is safe to end home isolation. See the source below for more information.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>

This FAQs document was adapted from CDC resources. For more information, visit: <https://www.coronavirus.gov>

