# COVID-19: Understanding Quarantine and Isolation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
<th><strong>Quarantine</strong></th>
<th><strong>Isolation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying home, monitoring your health and separating from others after being recently in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.</strong></td>
<td>Staying home, monitoring your health and separating from others when you have COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms.</td>
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<th>Who needs to do this?</th>
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| People who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and either:  
  • Are not up to date on their COVID-19 vaccines  
  • Have not had COVID-19 in the last 90 days  
  Everyone else does not need to quarantine but should get tested, wear a face mask and follow other precautions. | People who test positive for COVID-19 or have COVID-19 symptoms, even if they are vaccinated. |

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<td>If you are near someone with COVID-19, you are more likely to get it. Staying home prevents the spread to others. You can have and spread COVID-19 even if you do not have symptoms.</td>
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<th>Where should I stay?</th>
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<td>At home or a free Take Care hotel. Call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319) or visit <a href="http://www.nyc">www.nyc</a> Heathandhospitals.org/take-care.</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least five days after your last close contact with the person who has COVID-19. Wear a mask around others and follow key prevention measures for 10 days after your last close contact.</td>
<td>At least five days from when your symptoms began (or if you had no symptoms, your test date). If your symptoms do not improve or you have had fever in the past 24 hours, keep isolating. Wear a mask around others and follow key prevention measures for 10 days after your symptoms began (or test date, if you had no symptoms).</td>
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<th>Should I get tested for COVID-19?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, you should get tested five days after your last close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or right after you develop symptoms.</td>
<td>If you have symptoms, get tested right away. Stay isolated while waiting for your test result.</td>
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<th>Should I get medical care?</th>
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<td>Take your temperature twice daily and monitor for other symptoms. Contact your health care provider if you develop symptoms. Go to a hospital or call 911 if you have trouble breathing or another medical emergency.</td>
<td>Take your temperature twice daily and monitor for other symptoms. Contact your health care provider to let them know you tested positive or have symptoms and discuss treatment options. Go to a hospital or call 911 if you have trouble breathing or another medical emergency.</td>
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<th>How do I protect other household members?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid being near them as much as possible. Wear a mask whenever not alone in a room. Clean and disinfect your home.</td>
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<th>Can I go to work or school?</th>
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<td>Some people can go to work or school (see below).</td>
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<th>Where am I allowed to go?</th>
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<td>To get essential medical care (including testing) and basic needs, like groceries, if you have no other way to get them.</td>
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Quarantine

What does it mean to be fully vaccinated and up to date?

**Fully vaccinated** means it has been at least two weeks since your second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. People who got a two-dose vaccine or combination of vaccines authorized by the World Health Organization are also fully vaccinated.

**Up to date** means you are fully vaccinated and have received additional doses and booster shots when eligible, including:

- Your two-dose (Pfizer or Moderna) or one-dose (Johnson & Johnson) primary vaccine
- A third dose if you have a weakened immune system (if eligible)
- A booster shot (if eligible)

For information on third dose and booster shot eligibility, see [on.nyc.gov/thirddose](http://on.nyc.gov/thirddose) and [on.nyc.gov/boosterfaq](http://on.nyc.gov/boosterfaq).

What is a close contact?

Close contacts are people who have been within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19, for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. This can be from two days before the person with COVID-19’s symptoms began (or if they have no symptoms, two days before they tested positive). Usually, everyone living with someone who has COVID-19 are close contacts. This definition may change in places like schools and health care facilities.

Who does not need to quarantine, and what precautions should they take?

You do not need to quarantine if you either:

- Are up to date with your vaccines
- Had COVID-19 in the last 90 days (as confirmed by a positive viral test)
  - 90 days is from when you first had COVID-19 symptoms or, if you had no symptoms, the date of your first positive test.

If you are a close contact who does not need to quarantine, follow these precautions:

- Monitor symptoms for 10 days after your last contact with the person who has COVID-19.
- Get tested five days after your last close contact or right after you develop COVID-19 symptoms. If you had COVID-19 in the last 90 days, you do not need to get tested unless you develop symptoms.
- Isolate right away if you develop symptoms or test positive.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days after your last close contact (including at home).
- For 10 days after your last close contact, avoid spending time:
  - With people who are immunocompromised, are age 65 and older, or have a medical condition that increases their risk for severe COVID-19
  - In nursing homes and other high-risk settings
Who needs to quarantine, and for how long?
Close contacts who are not up to date with their vaccines must quarantine for at least five days from their last close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

You should get tested at least five days after your last close contact with the person who has COVID-19 or right away if you develop COVID-19 symptoms:
- If your test result is negative or you are unable to get tested, you can end quarantine after Day 5. Wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days after your last close contact and follow other precautions (see below).
- If your test result is positive, isolate.

Some people must quarantine for more than five days:
- Children age 2 and under and others who cannot wear a well-fitting mask must quarantine for 10 days.
- Some high-risk settings, such as nursing homes, may have different quarantine requirements.

The day after your last close contact with someone who has COVID-19 is Day 1 of quarantine. For example, if your last close contact was on January 1 and you quarantine for five days, your last day of quarantine is January 6 and you can end quarantine on January 7.

What prevention measures should I follow during quarantine and after quarantine ends?
For 10 days after your last close contact with someone who has COVID-19, even if you end quarantine sooner, you should:
- Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested and isolate if symptoms develop.
- Wear a well-fitting mask around others. Avoid spending time with people who are immunocompromised, are age 65 and older, or have a medical condition that increases their risk for severe COVID-19.
- Avoid high-risk settings and places where a mask cannot always be worn.
- Avoid crowds and nonessential activities.
- Avoid eating around others at home, at work and in a restaurant.
- Avoid travel. If you must travel, you should:
  - Not do so during your five-day quarantine period
  - Not do so until 10 days after your last close contact if you cannot get tested
  - Get tested at least five days after your last close contact, receive a negative test result and have no symptoms for all five days of quarantine before doing so
  - Wear a well-fitting mask around others for the entire 10 days. Anyone unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.

Who can go to school while in quarantine?
Many schools, including all NYC Department of Education kindergarten to grade 12 schools, allow children to attend in person during quarantine if testing and other requirements are met. Check with your child’s school about their requirements. Children must quarantine when not in school.
**Who can go to work while in quarantine?**
Some teachers, school staff and City workers can work during quarantine if they are fully vaccinated as well as some health care workers. Check with your employer if you think this applies to you. People allowed to attend work must continue to quarantine when not at work.

**What happens if I develop symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 after being in close contact with someone who has COVID-19?**
If you develop symptoms within 10 days of being in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, get tested and isolate while you wait for your result. If you test negative and are in quarantine, you must still complete quarantine. If you test positive, you must isolate. If testing is not possible, isolate for five days after your symptoms begin and wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days.

**Who must quarantine due to travel?**
Quarantine after travel is recommended for people who are not vaccinated and required for some people visiting from outside the U.S. For more information, visit [cdc.gov/covid19travel](http://cdc.gov/covid19travel).

**Someone in my household must quarantine due to close contact with someone who has COVID-19 outside the home. Do I have to quarantine too?**
No. Closely monitor for symptoms and take precautions to reduce your risk of getting COVID-19 if your household member has it. If the person in your household develops COVID-19, you will likely be a close contact and need to quarantine, unless you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines.

**Isolation**

**Who needs to isolate, and for how long?**
Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms must isolate, whether vaccinated or boosted. If you:

- **Test positive**, you can end isolation after five days if you do not have symptoms or your symptoms improve, and have not had a fever in the past 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. Otherwise, isolation should continue.
- **Have COVID-19 symptoms**, get tested right away and isolate while waiting for your result. If you test negative and are not in quarantine due to a recent close contact, you can end isolation if you have not had a fever in the past 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine. If you test negative and are in quarantine, you must finish your quarantine. If testing is not possible, isolate for five days after your symptoms begin.

Some people must isolate longer than five days:

- All children under age 2 and others who cannot wear a well-fitting mask for any reason must isolate for 10 days.
- People who have a medical condition, take medicine that weakens their immune system or are hospitalized for severe COVID-19 may need to isolate for more than five days and should speak with their provider.
- Some high-risk settings, such as nursing homes, may have longer isolation requirements.
Everyone should wear a well-fitting mask around others and follow key prevention measures for 10 days (see below).

The day after your symptoms begin (or if no symptoms, your test date) is Day 1 of isolation. For example, if your symptoms began on January 1 and you must isolate for five days, your last day of isolation is January 6 and you can end isolation on January 7. If you have no symptoms and were tested on January 1, you can end isolation on January 7. If you first develop symptoms after testing positive, the five-day isolation period should start over.

What precautions should I take during isolation and after isolation ends?
If you test positive for COVID-19, tell anyone you have been in close contact with from two days before your symptoms began (or if you had no symptoms, your test date) until you begin isolation. If you were at work, tell your employer. If your child tests positive and was in school, tell their school.

For 10 days after your symptoms begin (or if you have no symptoms, your test date), even if you end isolation sooner, you should:

- Wear a well-fitting mask around others (including at home).
- Take steps at home to avoid exposing others.
- Avoid spending time with people who are immunocompromised, are age 65 and older, or have a medical condition that increases their risk for severe COVID-19.
- Avoid high-risk settings and places where a mask cannot always be worn.
- Avoid crowds and nonessential activities.
- Avoid eating around others at home, at work and in a restaurant.
- Avoid travel. If you must travel, you should:
  - Not do so during your five-day isolation period
  - Avoid doing so until 10 days your symptoms began (or if you had no symptoms, your test date) after isolation ends
  - Wear a well-fitting mask around others for the entire 10 days. Anyone unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.

Do I need to get tested for COVID-19 to end isolation?
No. If you want to get tested, you should get a rapid antigen test toward the end of your five-day isolation period. If you test positive, keep isolating until Day 10. If you test negative, you can end isolation but keep wearing a mask and following other precautions for 10 days.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

How do I monitor my health?
Take your temperature twice daily. Check for symptoms, such as shortness of breath, cough, and loss of taste of smell or taste. If you have a fingertip oxygen meter (pulse oximeter), you can monitor your blood oxygen level (for instructions, visit on.nyc.gov/covid-oxygen).

Call your provider if you develop COVID-19 symptoms or your symptoms worsen. For medical emergencies, call 911 or go to a nearby hospital.
How can I protect others in my household during and after quarantine or isolation?
For 10 days after being in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or after your symptoms started (or test date, if you have no symptoms), you should:

- **Create physical distance:** Stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom, if possible. Keep away from others, especially people at increased risk for severe COVID-19 illness.
- **Cover up:** Wear a well-fitting mask when around others. Have them wear a mask around you. Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your arm.
- **Clean:** Wash your hands often with soap and water. Clean surfaces you touch often. Do not share towels, food or utensils.
- **Ventilate:** Open windows and doors. Use a portable air cleaner. Turn on bathroom and stovetop fans that pull air upward.

For resources to help isolate at home or a free hotel room, call 212-COVID19 (212-268-4319) or visit www.nychealthandhospitals.org/take-care.

What mask should I wear after a close contact, testing positive for COVID-19 or having symptoms?
Make sure your mask always snugly covers your nose and mouth. Consider wearing a higher-grade mask, such as an N95 or KN95, if you can. You can also wear a cloth mask over a disposable mask. For more information about masks, visit on.nyc.gov/face-masks.

What if I do not have a health care provider or health insurance?
NYC Health + Hospitals offers care, regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. Visit nychealthandhospitals.org or call 212-268-4319. If you have COVID-19, NYC Health + Hospitals can help connect you to treatment.

Additional Resources:
- For information on COVID-19, visit nyc.gov/health/coronavirus.
- For information on COVID-19 vaccination, visit nyc.gov/covidvaccine.
- For information on COVID-19 treatment, visit nyc.gov/health/covidtreatments.
- For information on COVID-19 testing, visit nyc.gov/health/testingtips. To find a COVID-19 testing site, visit nyc.gov/covidtest. Many sites offer free testing.
- For information on paid sick leave during quarantine or isolation, visit nyc.gov/health/covidtreatments and paidfamilyleave.ny.gov/covid19.
- If you have questions, call 311 or 212-268-4319.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 1.22.22