

COVID-19: Close Contact Fact Sheet



Who is considered a close contact to someone with COVID-19?

For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who:

- Was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes
- Provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Had direct physical contact with the infected person (hugged or kissed them)
- Shared eating or drinking utensils
- Were sneezed, coughed or somehow got respiratory droplets from an infected person on you

An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

What will happen during contact tracing if I have been around someone with COVID-19?

If you were around someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, someone from the health department may call you to let you know that you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

If you are a close contact, stay home away from others for 14 days (self-quarantine) after your last contact with that person. Health department staff will help identify the dates for your self-quarantine. Health department staff can also provide resources for COVID-19 testing in your area.

- Self-quarantine means staying home away from others and monitoring your health.
- If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a mask. This will help protect the people around you.
- If you need support or assistance while in self-quarantine, your health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

Monitor your health and watch for symptoms of COVID-19. Remember, symptoms may appear 2-14 days after you were exposed to COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 includes:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If you develop symptoms, seek testing through a medical provider or community testing event. If symptoms worsen or become severe, seek medical care. Severe symptoms include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.

Am I considered a close contact if I was wearing a mask?

Yes, you are still considered a close contact even if you were wearing a mask while you were around someone with COVID-19. Masks are meant to protect other people in case you are infected, and not to protect you from becoming infected.

I was around someone who has COVID-19, and my COVID-19 test came back negative. Do I still need to quarantine for 14 days after I was last exposed?

Yes. You should still self-quarantine for 14 days since your last exposure. It can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for a person to develop COVID-19 symptoms. A negative result before end of the 14-day quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. By self-quarantining for 14 days, you lower the chance of possibly exposing others to COVID-19.

Resources

- CDC When to Quarantine: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>
- CDC When to Isolate: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>
- CDC FAQ: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

For more information: www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus

