

COVID-19: What to do if you were exposed

If you have been exposed to someone with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, follow the steps below to monitor your health and to help prevent COVID-19 from spreading to people in our homes and communities.

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that can spread from person to person. The most common symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild disease but some people will get sicker and may need to be hospitalized.

Who is at higher risk of severe illness?

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

How do I know if I was exposed?

You generally need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. Close contact includes:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19,
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19,
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 10 minutes, OR
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).

What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 but am not sick?

You should monitor your health for fever, cough and difficulty breathing during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. You should not go to work or school, and should avoid public places for 14 days.

What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?

If you get sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing (even if your symptoms are very mild), you should stay at home and away from other people. If you have any of the following conditions that may increase your risk for a serious infection —age 60 years or over, are pregnant, or have medical conditions—contact your physician's office and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19.

If you do not have a high-risk condition but want medical advice, you can call your healthcare provider and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. If you're mildly ill, you do not need to be evaluated in person and do not need to be tested for COVID-19. Keep in mind that there are currently no medications to treat COVID-19 and you will receive the same advice whether or not you have a test. Most importantly, stay home away from others for:

- at least 7 days since your symptoms first appeared; **and**
- at least 3 days (72 hours) with no fever (without using fever-reducing medications) and improving symptoms.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you may have been exposed to COVID-19. If possible, put on a face mask before emergency medical services arrive or immediately after they arrive.