Discontinuing Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19:
Accumulating evidence supports ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using a symptom-based strategy. Specifically, researchers have reported that people with mild to moderate COVID-19 remain infectious no longer than 10 days after their symptoms began, and those with more severe illness or those who are severely immunocompromised remain infectious no longer than 20 days after their symptoms began. Therefore, CDC has updated the recommendations for discontinuing home isolation as follows:

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 10 days* have passed since symptom onset and
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Other symptoms have improved.

*A limited number of persons with severe illness may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days, that may warrant extending duration of isolation for up to 20 days after symptom onset. Consider consultation with infection control experts. See Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings (Interim Guidance).

Persons infected with SARS-CoV-2 who never develop COVID-19 symptoms may discontinue isolation and other precautions 10 days after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA.

Note that recommendations for discontinuing isolation in persons known to be infected with SARS-CoV-2 could, in some circumstances, appear to conflict with recommendations on when to discontinue quarantine for persons known to have been exposed to SARS-CoV-2. CDC recommends 14 days of quarantine after exposure based on the time it takes to develop illness if infected. Thus, it is possible that a person known to be infected could leave isolation earlier than a person who is quarantined because of the possibility they are infected.

These recommendations will prevent most, but cannot prevent all, instances of secondary spread. The best available evidence suggests that recovered persons can continue to shed detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA in upper respiratory specimens for up to 3 months after illness onset, albeit at concentrations considerably lower than during illness, in ranges where replication-competent virus has not been reliably recovered and infectiousness is unlikely. Studies have not found evidence that clinically recovered persons with persistence of viral RNA have transmitted SARS-CoV-2 to others.


Who needs to quarantine?

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19—excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.
What counts as close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Steps to take

Stay home and monitor your health

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19

When to start and end quarantine

You should stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.

For all of the following scenarios, even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. See scenarios below to determine when you can end quarantine and be around others.

Scenario 1: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—will not have further close contact

I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick (e.g., co-worker, neighbor, or friend).

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact.

Date of last close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine

Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.
Scenario 2: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—live with the person but can avoid further close contact

I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have had no close contact with the person since they isolated.

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation.

\[
\text{Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation} + 14 \text{ days} = \text{end of quarantine}
\]

Scenario 3. Under quarantine and had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19

I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started my 14-day quarantine period because we had close contact. What if I ended up having close contact with the person who is sick during my quarantine? What if another household member gets sick with COVID-19? Do I need to restart my quarantine?

Yes. You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.

\[
\text{Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19} + 14 \text{ days} = \text{end of quarantine}
\]
Scenario 4: Live with someone who has COVID-19 and cannot avoid continued close contact

I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, don’t have a separate bedroom to isolate the person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation.

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine

Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.