

## **Guidance for Close Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19**

This guidance is for close contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. DC Health recommends that you follow the steps below to help prevent the spread of the virus in the home and community. This guidance is intended for the general public. It is not for use in healthcare settings or congregate settings (including correctional/detention facilities, homeless shelters, intermediate care facilities, community residence facilities, and supported living facilities).

### **Definitions:**

**Close contact:** Someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, while that person was infectious.

- **UPDATE:** Exception to close contact definition in **schools:**
  - In the K-12 indoor classroom setting, the close contact definition excludes students who were 3-6 feet away from a student who tested positive, where:
    - both students were engaged in consistent and correct use of well-fitting face masks  
AND
    - other layered prevention strategies were in place (such as universal mask wearing regardless of vaccination status, physical distancing, and increased ventilation)
    - For more information, see *Guidance for Schools* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance)

**Infectious period:** The time period during which someone is able to spread their infection to others. The infectious period for COVID-19 starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset (or test date for people who don't have symptoms).

**Incubation period:** The time period between when someone is exposed to an infectious agent and when the first symptoms may appear. The incubation period for COVID-19 can be as little as 2 days and as long as 14 days.

**Fully Vaccinated:** An individual is considered fully vaccinated at day 14 after completion of a COVID-19 vaccination series (after the second dose of a 2-dose series, or after one dose of a single-dose vaccine)<sup>1</sup>.

**Quarantine:** The process of separating individuals who have been exposed to an infectious agent (like COVID-19) before they develop symptoms of infection or test positive for infection, for the duration of time that covers the incubation period for the pathogen. Quarantine is a powerful tool for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

### **Quarantine Recommendations:**

- **UPDATE:** Fully vaccinated people who are close contacts of someone with COVID-19 and **asymptomatic** generally do not need to quarantine or be restricted from work, but they **should:**
  - Get a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after the date they were exposed. (See **Getting tested** section below)

<sup>1</sup> Day an individual received final dose of vaccine=Day 0

<sup>2</sup> **Immunocompromised** means having a weakened immune system due to a medical condition or from taking medications that suppress the immune system. This includes, but is not limited to: people on chemotherapy, people with blood cancers like leukemia, people who have had an organ transplant or stem cell transplant, and people on dialysis.

- Consider wearing a mask at home for 14 days if they live with someone who is immunocompromised.<sup>2</sup>
- For more information, see information on *Guidance for Fully Vaccinated People* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
- **People who have been identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19 are NOT required to quarantine or test if:**
  - They have had COVID-19 (symptomatic or asymptomatic) within the last 90 days **AND**
  - They do not have any symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection<sup>2</sup>
- **NOTE:** People who are not required to quarantine as per the conditions outlined above must still self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after the date of their exposure. If a close contact develops symptoms of COVID-19 during this time period, they must isolate and follow up with their healthcare provider for testing.
- **All other people who have been identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19 should begin self-quarantine as soon as they are notified of their exposure.**

### How to Quarantine:

For COVID-19, quarantining for 14 days is the safest option. However, ending quarantine after 10 days may be acceptable. For information on reduced quarantine periods, see *Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).

- **Stay at home except to get medical care:**
  - Do not participate in public activities or gatherings (e.g., grocery shopping, places of worship, parties, etc.).
  - Do not leave home to go to work or school.
  - Work from home (telework) or utilize sick leave if possible.
  - If you are a student, make alternate arrangements to obtain class materials.
- **Separate yourself from other people** at your home as much as possible during your isolation period.
  - Use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- **Avoid contact with pets.**
- **Do not allow non-essential visitors into your home.**
- **Avoid sharing household items.** You should not share dishes, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After you use these items, wash them thoroughly.
- **Wear a mask if you need to be around other people.** If you are not able to wear a mask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should wear a mask if they need to be in the same room as you.
- **Answer the phone** when you get a call from the DC Health Contact Trace Team.
  - Caller ID will say “DC COVID-19 Team” on any phone with any carrier.
  - More information can be found at [coronavirus.dc.gov/dccontacttraceforce](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/dccontacttraceforce).

### Getting Tested for COVID-19

- **UPDATE: Close contacts, including people who are fully vaccinated, should be tested between 3 and 5 days after exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19.** Isolate if the test is positive and follow recommendations in *Guidance for People who Test Positive for COVID-19* at [coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance](https://coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance).
- You can get tested through your healthcare provider or at a free public testing site,

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<sup>2</sup> **Symptoms of COVID-19** may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), 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, or diarrhea.

including a self-testing option “Test Yourself DC” at a community facility near you.

- When you go for testing, wear a mask or cloth face covering and keep at least 6 feet of distance from other people.
  - If your test results are negative for COVID-19, you should still complete your full quarantine period and continue monitoring for symptoms.
- If your test results are positive for COVID-19, please be aware that the DC Health Contact Trace Team will call you to ask you about your contacts

### Monitor Yourself for Symptoms of COVID-19

- Be alert for possible symptoms of COVID-19<sup>2</sup> for the entire 14-day incubation period.
- If you develop symptoms:
  - Separate yourself from other people and contact your healthcare provider. Let them know about your exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
  - **If you have a medical emergency**, please call 911. Be sure to let them know about your exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
- **Visits to a healthcare facility for any reason must be via medical transport (e.g., ambulance) or private vehicle (not public transportation).** Be sure to call ahead and wear a mask or cloth face covering.

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov) regularly for the most current information.