

What to do if you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19

This information is for people who were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. Close contact means being closer than six feet or two meters apart for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period while the person was infectious, which starts two days before any symptoms began (or for people without any symptoms, two days before the day they got tested) and continues until they are [recovered](#). Close contact does not mean being more than six feet or two meters away in the same indoor environment for less than 15 minutes, walking by, or briefly being in the same room. Health care workers: please see [“COVID-19: What to do if you are a health care worker”](#).

Examples of close contacts	Examples of NOT close contacts
You live in the same home	You were their cashier at the grocery store
You are intimate partners	You are a pharmacist who gave the person medication
You rode in the same car while the person was infectious	You were in front of the person in line at the store

Quarantine at home and watch for symptoms for 14 days:

- Day 0 is the day you were last in contact with the person.
- Watch for symptoms, even if mild, of cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, fatigue, muscle pain or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Don't leave home, except to get medical care. [Wear a cloth mask](#) if you need to leave home.
- Call ahead before visiting a health care provider or emergency department.
- If possible, stay in a specific room in your home and use a separate bathroom.
- Stay at least six feet or two meters away from others in your home at all times. Wear a cloth mask if you're in any room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing. Don't share household items.
- Stay connected with others – use technology to communicate with friends and family.

If after 14 days you still don't have symptoms, you may end your quarantine. Neither a negative test for COVID-19 nor a letter from the Health Department should be required from your employer to return to work. The Health Department does not provide letters indicating that you can return to work.

Daily cleaning and washing:

- Clean and disinfect surfaces in your home. If you are staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom, clean them yourself. Have someone else clean the other areas of the home.
- Thoroughly wash household items, like utensils, after using.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

If at any point you develop symptoms:

- Contact your health care provider by phone to find out if you should be evaluated. Let them know you are quarantining at home for novel coronavirus because you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- If you're having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to the hospital.
- If you don't have a provider, call 2-1-1 to be connected to a clinic in your area.
- People with mild illness can treat their symptoms at home: get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take fever-reducing medication if needed.

When to get medical care immediately:

If you have trouble breathing, chest pain, confusion, or changes in color on your lips, gums, face, around the eyes, or nails, seek medical care immediately. When you call for medical care, tell the provider or 9-1-1 that you are quarantining at home because you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Difference between isolation and quarantine

	Self-isolation	Self-quarantine
For whom?	People with symptoms of COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people with COVID-19 who aren't sick enough to be hospitalized, or • For people who are waiting for test results 	People with no symptoms of COVID19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close contacts of people with COVID19
For how long?	Until recovery, which is when all three have happened (unless you get different instructions from your medical provider): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, and 2. Other symptoms have improved, and 3. At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Or if you didn't have symptoms when you were tested, recovery is when 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test and you continued to have no symptoms.	For 14 days since the last date of possible exposure. The day of the exposure is Day 0. You have the option of getting tested during your quarantine period if you have not had any symptoms. On or after day 7, you can get a test through your provider or a pop-up testing site. Remain in quarantine until you get your results. If the results are negative, and you still don't have any symptoms, you can discontinue quarantine. You will get a call from the Health Department when your results are ready, which is usually within 2-4 days, if not sooner. You will also get a letter in the mail within 7 days of being tested.
What does it mean?	Staying home 24/7 in a separate room in the house, using a separate bathroom, avoiding contact with others. Wear a mask if you're in a room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing.	Staying home 24/7, monitoring for symptoms, and practicing social distancing. If possible, using a separate room and bathroom. If you become symptomatic, your close contacts should also self-quarantine.

More information is available on our website: www.healthvermont.gov/COVID-19

Today you were tested for COVID-19. It may take a few days to get your results. Results from today's test will tell you if you are infected or sick today. It is possible you could test positive in the future.

While you wait for results:

- If you are being tested because you have symptoms of COVID-19, are a close contact to someone who has COVID-19, or were recommended for testing, **stay home and do not go out in public, even if you don't feel sick.** Staying home will stop COVID-19 from spreading.
- If you need to see a health care provider, call them first and tell them that you were tested for COVID-19 and are waiting for results.

If your test results are **positive**, do these things right away:

- **Stay at home** and away from other people, including the people you live with.
- **Make a list of the names and phone numbers of your close contacts.** A close contact is a person who you were within 6 feet of for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period during your infectious period. Your infectious period starts two days before symptoms began – or two days before the date you were tested if you do not have symptoms.
The Health Department will ask for this information when they call you, and will share important information with your close contacts about how to prevent further spread. You might not hear from the Health Department right away, so go ahead and reach out to your close contacts if you'd like. Your close contacts should quarantine (stay home and away from other people for 14 days), and consider getting tested.
- **Contact your health care provider if needed** to talk about your care and treatment of any symptoms.
- **Answer the phone if you get a call from the Health Department.** The person calling will give you important information. If you miss the call, you may call us back at 802-863-7240.

If your test results are **negative** and **you are in quarantine due to travel or close contact with a person who has COVID-19** and:

- you were tested **on day 7** of quarantine or after, and you don't have any symptoms, **you may end quarantine.**
- OR
- you were tested **before day 7** of quarantine, **stay in quarantine** until you have a negative test on or after day 7, or for the rest of the 14-day quarantine.

Or, if your test results are **negative** and **you are not in quarantine due to travel or close contact with a person who has COVID-19**:

- continue taking preventive actions like wearing a mask, hand washing and social distancing.
- if you are sick with an illness other than COVID-19, stay home until symptoms improve.

For more information about COVID-19: www.healthvermont.gov/COVID-19

What to do if you are diagnosed with COVID-19

Isolate at home:

- Don't leave home, except to get medical care. Call ahead before visiting a health care provider or emergency department and wear a [wear a cloth mask](#).
- Most people with mild illness can recover at home. While there is no specific treatment for COVID-19, you should get plenty of rest, drink plenty of fluids, and take fever-reducing medication if needed.
- As much as possible, stay in a specific room in your home and use a separate bathroom. Stay at least six feet or two meters away from others in your home at all times. Wear a cloth mask if you're in a room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing. Don't share household items.
- Have someone else care for your pets. A small number of pets have been reported to be sick with COVID-19. People with the virus should limit contact with animals until more information is known. If you need to care for your pet, wear a cloth mask and wash your hands before and after.
- Stay connected with others – use technology to communicate with friends and family.

Daily cleaning and washing:

- Clean and disinfect surfaces in your separate room and bathroom. Have someone else clean the other areas of your home.
- Thoroughly wash household items, like utensils, after using.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

When to get medical care immediately:

If you have difficulty breathing, chest pain, confusion, or changes in color on your lips, gums, face, around the eyes, or nails, seek medical care immediately. When you call for medical care, tell the provider or 911 that you have COVID-19 and are isolating at home.

People who have been in close contact with you while you were infectious should quarantine at home – even if they don't have symptoms:

- People that were in close contact with you during your infectious period, which starts two days before you developed any symptoms (or if you haven't had any symptoms, two days before the day you got tested) and continues until you have [recovered](#), should quarantine at home. They can refer to the [“What to do if you are a close contact of someone who is diagnosed with COVID-19”](#) guide. Close contacts of your close contacts do not need to follow the guidelines (unless they have symptoms).
- Close contact means being within six feet or two meters for a total of 15 minutes or more in a 24-hour period. Close contact does not mean being more than six feet or two meters away in the same indoor environment for less than 15 minutes, walking by, or briefly being in the same room.

Examples of close contacts	Examples of NOT close contacts
People living in the same home	Cashier at the grocery store
Intimate partners	Pharmacists who gave you medication
People who rode in the same car while you were infectious	The person in front of you in line at the store

It's safe to stop home isolation when you've recovered. Unless you get different instructions from your medical provider, recovery is when all three things have happened:

1. It's been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, **and**
2. Other symptoms have improved, **and**
3. At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

Or if you didn't have symptoms when you were tested, recovery is when 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test and you continued to have no symptoms.

Neither a negative test for COVID-19 nor a letter from the Health Department should be required from your employer to return to work. We do not provide letters indicating that you can work.

Difference between isolation and quarantine

	Self-isolation	Self-quarantine
For whom?	People with symptoms of COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people with COVID-19 who aren't sick enough to be hospitalized, or • For people who are waiting for test results 	People with no symptoms of COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close contacts of people with COVID-19
For how long?	Until recovery, which is when all three have happened (unless you get different instructions from your medical provider): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, and 2. Other symptoms have improved, and 3. At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Or if you didn't have symptoms when you were tested, recovery is when 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive test and you continued to have no symptoms.	For 14 days since the last date of possible exposure. The day of the exposure is Day 0. You have the option of getting tested during your quarantine period if you have not had any symptoms. On or after day 7, you can get a test through your provider or a pop-up testing site. Remain in quarantine until you get your results. If the results are negative, and you still don't have any symptoms, you can discontinue quarantine. You will get a call from the Health Department when your results are ready, which is usually within 2-4 days, if not sooner. You will also get a letter in the mail within 7 days of being tested.
What does it mean?	Staying home 24/7 in a separate room in the house, using a separate bathroom, avoiding contact with others. Wear a mask if you need to be in the same room with other people, unless you have trouble breathing.	Staying home 24/7, monitoring for symptoms, and practicing social distancing. If possible, using a separate room and bathroom. If you become symptomatic, your close contacts should also self-quarantine.

This guidance was developed by public health and health care professionals using proven public health principles at a time when community transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 illness in Vermont is extremely low. It may be revised in response to changing local and state circumstances.

What happens if my child has symptoms at home or gets sick in school?

- If your child has any of the symptoms listed below, keep them home from school and call the school to report their absence.
- If your child has any of the symptoms listed below while at school, they will be moved to an area set up specifically for students not feeling well and you will be called to come pick up your child as soon as possible.
- We encourage you sign a consent form that allows information to be shared between your child's school nurse (when available) and health care provider when your child is sick.
- While it is strongly encouraged that decisions about when a student may return to school are made with the school nurse, the student's health care provider, and the family, such decisions must ultimately ensure the health and safety of your child's school and community.

When does my child need a COVID-19 [test](#)?

Cough (new)	<p>If your child has ANY ONE of these symptoms, they likely need a COVID-19 test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your child's healthcare provider for medical advice and possible office visit or referral to be tested. • Communicate the plan with your child's school nurse or designated personnel.
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	
Loss of taste (new)	
Loss of smell (new)	
Fever alone that persists > 24 hours (temperature higher than 100.4°)	
Fever (temperature higher than 100.4°)	<p>If your child has TWO OR MORE of these symptoms, they MIGHT need a COVID-19 test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your child's healthcare provider for medical advice and possible office visit to determine what to do next. • Communicate the plan with your child's school nurse or designated personnel. <p>If your child has ONLY ONE of these symptoms, keep your child at home until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine. • They have felt better for at least 24 hours (symptoms are improved or gone).
Chills	
Muscle or body aches	
Headache	
Sore throat	
Fatigue	
Congestion or runny nose (new)	
Nausea or vomiting	
Diarrhea	

When can my child go back to school?

You **do not** need a signed doctor's note for your child to re-enter school.

- If your child **had a COVID-19 test**:
 - They must quarantine until they have received results of the test.
 - If the test results are **NEGATIVE**, they can go back to school after:
 - Your child has had no fever for 24 hours without taking fever-reducing medicine. **AND**
 - Your child feels better, **and** their symptoms are improving.
 - If the test results are **POSITIVE**, they can go back to school after:
 - It has been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, **AND**
 - Other symptoms have improved, **AND**
 - At least 10 days have passed since any symptoms appeared.
- If your child **did not** have a COVID-19 test because they only had one of the symptoms in the yellow box above, they can go back to school when:
 - Your child has had no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine **AND**
 - Your child has felt better for at least 24 hours (symptoms are improved or gone).
- If your child had any symptom in the red box or two or more symptoms in the yellow box but was not seen by their health care professional and did not have a COVID-19 test, they can go back to school after:
 - It has been 24 hours of no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication, **AND**
 - Other symptoms have improved, **AND**
 - At least 10 days have passed since any symptoms appeared.

This document was adapted with permission from the [Rhode Island Department of Health](#)

[COVID-19 in Pediatric Patients \(Pre-K – Grade 12\) Triage, Evaluation, Testing and Return to School](#)

[A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools](#)