

Quarantine Options: Frequently Asked Questions



I'm a close contact without symptoms. How long do I need to quarantine?

The Department of Health Services continues to recommend a 14-day quarantine for close contacts without symptoms whenever possible. There is guidance to shorten quarantine further, provided close contacts continue to monitor for symptoms for the full 14 days.

- Quarantine may be shortened from 14 days to 10 days.
- Quarantine may be shortened further to 7 days with a negative test (PCR or antigen) collected on day 6 or 7.

Continue to follow all public health guidelines such as wearing a mask, washing your hands, physical distancing, and avoiding gatherings. Shortened quarantine options may not be acceptable in some circumstances or settings. If you are unsure about quarantine requirements, contact your local health department.

Why has quarantine guidance for close contacts of someone with COVID-19 changed?

New scientific evidence suggests that the risk of transmission after 10 days is relatively low among close contacts who never had symptoms. In some situations, the additional risk associated with a shortened quarantine may be outweighed by the potential benefits, which place less burden on individuals, families, and communities.

Shortened quarantine options may be considered acceptable in some settings, but not preferred because they carry increased risk of transmission compared to the 14-day quarantine.



Why is a 14-day quarantine considered the safest and recommended option?

The incubation period for the virus that causes COVID-19 is still 14 days. This means you can develop an infection any time in the 14 days after close contact with a person with COVID-19.

The likelihood that a close contact who has not had any symptoms can spread COVID-19 after a 10-day quarantine is relatively low, but not as low as those who quarantine for a full 14 days.

What if my local health department, workplace, or school requires a 14-day quarantine and does not recommend the shortened quarantine periods?

Follow local and institutional quarantine guidance. If you are unsure about the quarantine requirements in your area, contact your local health department for more information.

Can I participate in essential activities (work, school, grocery shopping, etc.) outside the home after I've completed my 10-day or 7-day quarantine period?

Consult with your local health department, workplace, or school about when it is okay to return to essential activities. If you complete a shortened quarantine period, you must still continue to monitor for symptoms and follow public health guidance for the 14-days following your close contact.

If you cannot maintain physical distance from others (i.e., taking public transportation, working in close contact with other) while monitoring for symptoms, it is recommended that you do not shorten your quarantine and you quarantine for the full 14 days.

What happens if I develop symptoms during my quarantine, or after my quarantine ends?

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point, isolate yourself from others, contact your health care provider, and get tested for COVID-19.

What if I'm a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and I live in a high-risk congregate settings such as a long-term care facility, shelter, jail, or prison?

Shortened quarantine options may not be acceptable in some circumstances or settings. Quarantine lengths in high-risk congregate settings may be determined on a case-by-case basis. Follow local and institutional quarantine guidance.

I'm a close contact of someone with COVID-19. If I get tested on day 4 of quarantine and my result is negative, can I shorten my quarantine to 7 days?

No. Quarantine can end after 7 days only if you have not developed any symptoms and have a negative test result (PCR or antigen) collected on **day 6 or 7 (within 48 hours of the end of quarantine)**. If your local health department allows for quarantine to end early, you will need to be retested on day 6 or 7 of quarantine.

If I receive the COVID-19 vaccine, do I still need to quarantine?

If you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, meaning it has been at least two weeks since you received your last dose in the vaccine series, and you were in close contact with someone with COVID-19, you do not have to quarantine. However you should:

- Get tested 5-7 days after exposure and continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days after your last close contact.
- Wear a mask in public indoor spaces for 14 days after exposure or until you receive a negative COVID-19 test result.

If, at any time, you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, isolate from others, contact your health care provider, and get tested.

