

ISOLATION

Isolation is required for individuals who have been infected with COVID-19. You isolate in order to prevent spreading the virus to others. You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results. If your results are positive, follow the full isolation recommendations.

Stay Home When You Have Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

If you have symptoms, get tested and stay home until you have your results. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.

If you have tested positive (even without symptoms), follow CDC's [isolation recommendations](#).

How long should you isolate?

When you have COVID-19, isolation is counted in days, as follows:

If you have no symptoms

- **Day 0 is the day you were tested** (not the day you received your positive test result)
- **Day 1 is the first full day** following the day you were tested
- If you develop [symptoms](#) within 10 days of when you were tested, the **clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset**

If you have symptoms

- **Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset**, regardless of when you tested positive
- **Day 1 is the first full day** after the day your [symptoms](#) started

When in Isolation

- Stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home. You are most infectious during these first 5 days.
- Wear a high-quality mask if you must be around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see CDC's Travel [webpage](#).
- Do not travel.
- Stay home and separate from others as much as possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to [improve ventilation](#) at home, if possible.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Monitor your symptoms. If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (like trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.

Ending Isolation

End isolation based on how serious your COVID-19 symptoms were. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

| If you had no symptoms | If you had symptoms and: | | If you had symptoms and had: | |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| | Your symptoms are improving | Your symptoms are not improving | Moderate illness (you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) | Severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system |
| You may end isolation after day 5. | You may end isolation after day 5 if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). | Continue to isolate until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication). Your symptoms are improving. | You need to isolate through day 10. | You need to isolate through day 10. Consult your doctor before ending isolation. Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you. |

If you are unsure if your symptoms are moderate or severe or if you have a weakened immune system, talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Regardless of when you end isolation

Until at least day 11:

- Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others at home and in public.

- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking (see below).
- For travel guidance, see CDC's Travel [webpage](#).

Removing Your Mask

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving),

- Wear your mask through day 10

OR

- If you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

Note: If your antigen test results are positive, you may still be infectious. You should continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test. Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean you need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.

As noted in the Food and Drug Administration labeling for authorized over-the-counter antigen tests, negative test results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions.

For more information about isolation, you can visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/how-long-to-self-isolate/longto-self-isolate/>

<https://www.hhs.gov/answers/public-health-and-safety/what-is-the-difference-betweenisolation-and-quarantine/index.html>

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