

CDC Explains: COVID Testing, Quarantine, Isolation and other Key Points

With the highly transmissible omicron variant circulating in our region, you may need to be tested for COVID because [you have symptoms](#) or because you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID.

Symptoms:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

If you need to be tested for COVID-19, consider using a **self-test** that can be performed at home or anywhere else. Sometimes a self-test is also called a “home test”, an “at-home test”, or an “over-the-counter (OTC) test.” Visit FDA’s website for a list of authorized tests. Some self-tests may have age limitations.

Self-tests can be purchased online or in pharmacies and retail stores. They are also available for free through some [local health department](#) or Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC).

Key points about self-tests:

- COVID-19 self-tests (also referred to as home tests or over-the-counter (OTC) tests) are one of many risk-reduction measures, along with [vaccination](#), [masking](#), and physical distancing, that [protect you and others](#) by reducing the chances of spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Self-tests can be taken at home or anywhere, are easy to use, and produce rapid results.
- You can use self-tests, regardless of vaccination status, or whether or not you have symptoms.
- Follow all of the manufacturer’s instructions for performing the test.
- [If you test positive](#), you should [isolate](#) and inform your healthcare provider, as well as any [close contacts](#).
- Consider using a self-test before joining indoor gatherings with others who are not in your household.
- A positive self-test result means that the test detected the virus, and you are very likely to have an infection and should stay home or isolate for 10 days, wear a mask if you could have contact with others, and avoid indoor gatherings to reduce the risk of spreading disease to someone else.
- A negative self-test result means that the test did not detect the virus and you may not have an infection, but it does not rule out infection. Repeating the test within a few days, with at least 24 hours between tests, will increase the confidence that you are not infected.

How Accurate are At-Home COVID Tests? Read more:

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/at-home-covid-tests-accuracy.html>

When to Quarantine

Quarantine if you have been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, unless you have been fully vaccinated. People who are fully vaccinated do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 5-7 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

Someone who tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 90 days **and** has subsequently recovered **and** remains without COVID-19 symptoms does not need to quarantine. However, close contacts with prior COVID-19 infection in the previous 90 days should:

- Wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days after exposure.
- Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and isolate immediately if symptoms develop.
- Consult with a healthcare professional for testing recommendations if new symptoms develop.

What should I quarantine and when should I isolate? Watch video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l3s75_X8Xjs

I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms

You can be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

**Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation*

Note that these recommendations **do not** apply to people with severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised).

I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since you had a positive viral test for COVID-19 (based on the date you were tested).

If you develop symptoms after testing positive, your 10-day isolation period must start over. Day 1 is your first day of symptoms. Follow the guidance above for “I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms.”

Read more:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine.html