COVID-19: Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts

For the latest version of this guidance, please check: [ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine)

SUMMARY

In Los Angeles County, if you have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 you are required* to:

1. **Quarantine** - stay home and separate yourself from others (unless you are exempt)
2. **Monitor your health for 14 days**
3. **Follow the Health Officer Quarantine Order** along with the steps below

It is recommended that you **get tested** for COVID-19 (unless you had a **positive test in the last 90 days**).

Recent travel: For information about quarantine after travel follow CDC **domestic** and **international** travel recommendations.

Who is exempt from quarantine?

You are not required to quarantine (you are exempt) if you do not have symptoms AND you either:

- Are **fully vaccinated** for COVID-19.
- OR
- Tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and **recovered**.

Even if you do not need to quarantine, you are required to monitor your health for symptoms1 of COVID-19 for 14 days from your last contact with the infected person and to follow instructions for **fully vaccinated** or **recently recovered** close contacts.

### QUARANTINE

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

Unless you are exempt, you need to quarantine if you are a **close contact** to someone who has COVID-19.

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1 Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after being exposed to the virus and may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms. Visit [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare) to learn more about what to do if you are sick.
What is a Close Contact?
You are a “close contact” if you were exposed to someone who tested positive* for COVID-19 while they were infectious\(^2\) if:

a. You were within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

b. You had unprotected contact with the body fluids and/or secretions from someone with COVID-19. For example, you were coughed or sneezed on, you shared a drinking cup or eating utensils, you kissed, or you provided care to them without wearing the right protective equipment.

*Tested positive means they had a positive COVID-19 viral test.

How long do I have to quarantine, monitor my health, and take precautions?
As long as you do not develop symptoms of COVID-19:

- You may leave quarantine **after** Day 10
  
  or
  
  - If you get a test* **on or after** Day 5 and it is negative, you may leave quarantine **after** Day 7.

Day 1 is the first full day after your last contact with the infected person.

- If you live with or care for a person with COVID-19 and cannot avoid close contact with them while they are still in isolation you must quarantine. To calculate the end of your quarantine, use the day after the infected person ends isolation as your Day 1.

- If you received a Public Health Emergency Quarantine Order and you don’t know when you were exposed to the infected person, use the date the order was issued as the date of your last contact with the infected person.

* The test must be an FDA-approved viral COVID-19 test that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site. Home-test kits cannot be used to end quarantine early.

Regardless of when you leave quarantine, you must take these steps for 14 days after your last contact with the infected person:

- **Monitor your health.** If you get symptoms, isolate at home right away. Follow the “If you develop symptoms” instructions below.

- **Be extra careful.** Wear a mask when around others (including household members). Stay at least 6 feet away from others, wash your hands often, and take other steps to protect others (and yourself).

Note: If you live with someone who is immunosuppressed, at increased risk for severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children under 5 years of age) consider wearing a mask at home for 14 days.

If you are experiencing homelessness or you are unable to safely isolate or quarantine at home, call the COVID Info line 833-540-0473, open daily 8:00am–8:30pm.

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\(^2\) A person with COVID-19 is considered to be able to spread the virus to others (infectious):

- if symptomatic-- from 2 days before their symptoms first started until their isolation period ends (i.e., 10 days after symptoms first appeared; and 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications; and symptoms have improved), OR

- if symptoms never develop--from 2 days before their positive viral test was taken until 10 days after that test was taken. If symptoms do develop, follow the instructions above.
**How to calculate a 10-day quarantine**

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- Last close contact with the infected person
- Quarantine
- Monitor your health
- Be extra careful

- Day 1 - first full day of quarantine
- Day 10 - last day of quarantine
- Day 14 - last day to monitor health

**How to calculate a 7-day quarantine**
(for people who tested negative on or after Day 5)

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- Last close contact with the infected person
- Quarantine
- Monitor your health
- Be extra careful

- First day to get a test to end quarantine early
- Day 1 - first full day of quarantine
- Day 7 - last day of quarantine if test taken on or after Day 5 is negative
- Day 14 - last day to monitor health

**How to calculate the 14-day monitoring period**

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- Last close contact with the infected person
- Monitor your health
- Be extra careful

- Day 14 - last day to monitor health
Restrictions during quarantine
To prevent you from spreading COVID-19, you must restrict activities and limit actions that may put you in contact with others.

- Stay home. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Only leave your place of quarantine to get medical care.
- Do not allow non-essential visitors.
- Separate yourself from others in your home (unless they are also in quarantine). If you need to be in the same room as other household members:
  - Wear a mask. If possible, choose a mask that has multiple layers and a snug fit and consider double masking. See Masks for more information including who should not wear a mask.
  - Keep 6 feet away. If you have to share a room, try setting up the room so that you can stay 6 feet apart, if possible. It is important to stay away from people who are not fully vaccinated and those who are at higher risk of serious illness.
  - Open windows to outdoor air (if safe to do so) to improve ventilation or use air filters and exhaust fans.
  - Use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, disinfect the bathroom after use.
- Do not make or serve food to others, if possible. If there is no one else to prepare and serve food, then be sure to wear a mask and wash your hands frequently.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Clean or disinfect high touch surfaces often, especially if you must share spaces with other household members.

Getting help with food and other necessities
- If you do not have someone to help you, you can arrange for food and other supplies to be left at your door. If you need help finding food or other supplies, call 2-1-1 or visit 211la.org, or visit the Public Health resource webpage.

Work and School
- Information about Disability Insurance, Unemployment & Paid Family Leave for people who are unable to work because they, or a family member, need to isolate or quarantine is available on the California Employment Development Department website.
- For more information on COVID-19 related work issues, view the COVID-19 Safety: Workers Rights in California Pamphlet.
- You do not need a letter from Public Health to return to work or school.
- If you were exposed to COVID-19 at work, check with your employer to see when you can return to work.

Steps to take when getting medical care or COVID-19 testing
- Wear a mask. If possible, choose a mask has multiple layers and a snug fit and consider double masking.
- Use a private car if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, be sure to keep as much distance as possible between you and the driver and leave the windows down. You should not use public transportation.
TESTING FOR COVID-19

As a close contact to someone with COVID-19, it is recommended that you get tested. However, if you have recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days, you should not get another test unless this is recommended by your doctor or public health – see instructions for people who have recovered from COVID-19.

If you are fully vaccinated, follow the instructions for people who have been fully vaccinated, otherwise, follow the instructions below.

- To get a test, call your doctor, visit covid19.lacounty.gov/testing, call 2-1-1, or visit Community-Based Testing Sites for COVID-19
  - When you go get tested, follow the testing center instructions, and wear a mask so you don’t infect other people. See Steps to take when getting medical care or COVID-19 testing.
- If your test result is positive:
  - You have COVID-19.
  - You need to isolate. See the Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19 at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.
  - You need to tell all of your close contacts that they were exposed. Tell them to follow the instructions for close contacts at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.
- If your test result is negative* AND you have not had symptoms of COVID-19:
  - If the test was collected on or after Day 5, you can end quarantine AFTER Day 7. Follow instructions in Duration of Quarantine.
  - If the test was collected before Day 5, you need to stay in quarantine.

* Home-test kits cannot be used to end quarantine early. The negative test must be an FDA-approved viral COVID-19 test that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site.

- If you develop symptoms, follow the instructions in the next section.

Visit COVID-19 Testing for information on types of tests and other resources.

MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

- It is important to monitor your health for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days from your last contact with the infected person. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include any of the following: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, feeling tired, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, congestion or runny nose, or new loss of taste or smell.
- Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are having serious symptoms. Serious symptoms include difficulty breathing, pain or pressure in your chest, have bluish lips or face or being confused or having difficulty waking up.

If you develop symptoms

- Isolate yourself at home.
- Contact your doctor, medical advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical assessment and ask for a COVID-19 test. Tell them that you have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19. Call the Los Angeles County Information line at 2-1-1 if you do not have a doctor. This number is available 24/7.
If you test positive for COVID-19 or your doctor thinks you have COVID-19, you must follow the Los Angeles County “Public Health Emergency Isolation Order” for COVID-19 and the “Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19” which are available in English, Spanish, and other languages.

You can stop isolating after meeting one of the following criteria:

A
- At least 10 days have passed from when your symptoms first started; AND
- Your COVID-19 symptoms have improved; AND
- You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.

- or -

B
- You test negative for COVID-19 and/or your doctor diagnosed you with another condition that was causing your symptoms; AND
- You have completed your quarantine period; AND
- You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.

*Please note that the instructions for symptomatic persons are different for some close contacts:

• If you are fully vaccinated, follow these instructions.
• If you have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months, follow these instructions.

Dealing with Stress

COVID-19 and quarantine may be stressful for people. Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health’s COVID-19 webpage and the 211LA webpage (211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health) for local resources to help with mental health & wellbeing concerns. Guidance and resources, including information on crisis hotlines, are also available on the CDC webpage Coping with stress.

LA County residents have free access to iPrevail.com, an online mental health resource to help with life’s everyday stressors. After a short assessment, you are connected to customized support to meet your needs. Options include:

• on-demand chat with trained Peer Coaches,
• self-paced lessons on a variety of topics to improve wellbeing, and
• community support groups.

iPrevail is offered in English and Spanish and is available 24/7 from any smart device.

If you need to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771. This number is available 24/7. You can also text “LA” to 74174.
• You may receive a call from a public health specialist if you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19. If you get a call or message from "LA PublicHealth" or 1-833-641-0305, please do your part by taking the call. You will be asked about your health and the places you have been.

• The specialist from Public Health can answer your questions and provide information like how to get a COVID-19 test or how to find a doctor or get help while you are in quarantine.

• Click [here](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine) for more information about contact tracing.
PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN FULLY VACCINATED

Definition: You are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two (2) weeks after:
- You got a single-dose of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, or
- You got a second dose of a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, or
- You finished the series of a COVID-19 vaccine that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization [WHO]. See [ph.lacounty.gov/fullyvax](http://ph.lacounty.gov/fullyvax) web page for more information.

After travel: If you are fully vaccinated and you entered LA County from outside of California, you do not need quarantine when you return if you don’t have any COVID-19 symptoms. You still need to monitor your health for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days after travel. If you do develop symptoms, isolate yourself away from others and get tested. Follow the CDC domestic and international travel guidance for fully vaccinated people.

Close contact: If you are fully vaccinated and are a close contact to someone with COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine if you don’t have any COVID-19 symptoms. Even if you do not need to quarantine, you must do the following for 14 days:
- Be extra careful. Wear a mask when around other people (including those in your household), stay at least 6 feet away from others, wash your hands often, and take other steps to protect others (and yourself).

In addition:
- Talk to Public Health if you get a call or message from “LA PublicHealth” or 1-833-641-0305.
- Get tested for COVID-19. It is recommended that you get tested 5-7 days after your exposure.
  - If your test is negative, it is very unlikely that you have COVID-19.
  - If your test is positive, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 and could spread it to others. You need to follow the Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19.

Note: If you live with someone who has a weak immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children under 5 years of age) consider wearing a mask at home for 14 days or at least until you receive a negative test result.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of your last close contact with the person with COVID-19
- Isolate yourself at home and stay away from others except for medical care.
- Contact your doctor, medical advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical assessment and ask for a COVID-19 test. Tell them that you are a close contact to person with COVID-19. Call the Los Angeles County Information line at 2-1-1 if you do not have a doctor. This number is available 24/7.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 or your doctor thinks you have COVID-19, you must follow the Los Angeles County “Public Health Emergency Isolation Order” for COVID-19 and the “Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19”.
- You can stop isolating after meeting one of the following criteria:
  A
  - At least 10 days have passed from when your symptoms first started; AND
  - Your COVID-19 symptoms have improved; AND
  - You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.
- or -

B

- You test negative for COVID-19 with a test* collected AFTER your COVID-19 symptoms began and/or your doctor diagnosed you with another condition that was causing your symptoms; AND
- You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.

* The test must be an FDA-approved viral COVID-19 test that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site.

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### PEOPLE WHO HAVE RECOVERED FROM COVID-19 IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again for 3 months (90 days)* as long as they do not develop new symptoms of COVID-19. *Recovered* means you are no longer *infectious* (and you have completed isolation).

* The 90 days are from when your COVID-19 symptoms first appeared. If you never had symptoms, then 90 days from your first positive viral test.

Note: If it has been more than 90 days since you had last had COVID-19, then you are required to quarantine after being exposed to COVID-19, unless you are fully vaccinated.

**After travel:** You do not need to quarantine or test after returning from travel outside of California if you don’t have symptoms. Follow the CDC *domestic* and *international* travel guidance for fully vaccinated people (which also applies to people who have recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months).

**After close contact with someone with COVID-19:** you do not have to quarantine or get tested if you don’t have symptoms. Even if you do not need to quarantine, you must:

- **Monitor your health** for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days from your last contact with the infected person.
- **Be extra careful.** Wear a mask when around other people (including those in your household), stay at least 6 feet away from others, wash your hands often, and **take other steps** to protect others (and yourself).

In addition:

- **Talk to Public Health** if you get a call or message from “LA PublicHealth” or 1-833-641-0305.

  Note: If you live with someone who is immunosuppressed, at increased risk for severe disease, or unvaccinated (including children under 5 years of age) consider wearing a mask at home for 14 days.

**If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of your last close contact with the person with COVID-19**

- Isolate yourself at home and stay away from others except when getting medical care.
- Contact your doctor, medical advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical assessment. Tell them that that you have recovered from COVID-19 within the past 3 months and that you are a close contact to person with COVID-19. Call the Los Angeles County Information line at 2-1-1 if you do not have a doctor. This number is available 24/7.
• If your doctor thinks you have COVID-19 again, you must follow the Los Angeles County “Public Health Emergency Isolation Order” for COVID-19 and the “Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19” which are available in English, Spanish, and other languages.

• You can stop isolating after meeting one of the following criteria:
  
  A
  - At least 10 days have passed from when your symptoms first started; AND
  - Your COVID-19 symptoms have improved; AND
  - You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.

  - or –

  B
  - Your doctor diagnosed you with another condition that was causing your symptoms; AND
  - You have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines.

Note: it is not recommended that you get another viral test for COVID-19 for at least 90 days after your first positive viral test, unless this is recommended by your doctor (or public health). This is because many people who have recovered from COVID-19 continue to have positive viral tests, even though they are no longer infectious. This is why it is best for you to see a doctor if you develop symptoms that may be COVID-19. If you do get a negative viral test after your symptoms develop you can end your isolation after you have been fever-free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medicines. The test must be an FDA-approved viral COVID-19 test that is collected and performed in a healthcare setting or certified testing site.

FURTHER INFORMATION

• For more information, visit the Public Health website ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus or call 2-1-1 (which is available 24/7).

• Please call your doctor for any questions about your health. If you need help finding a doctor, call 2-1-1.