

HOME ISOLATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH COVID-19

If you're diagnosed with COVID-19, you need to isolate yourself until you're no longer at risk of infecting others.

-
1. **HOME**
 2. **DEPARTMENTS**
 3. **PUBLIC HEALTH**
 4. **COVID-19**
 5. **ADVISORIES & SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS**
 6. **ISOLATION**

SUMMARY

In St. Louis County, if you have COVID-19, you are required to:

- Isolate yourself, and
- Tell your [close contacts](#) that they need to quarantine, and
- Follow the Isolation Guidelines below.¹

You are considered to have COVID-19, and will be required to isolate, if a swab or saliva test comes back positive or if a health care provider thinks that you have it.

Note: If you had COVID-19 within the last 90 days and you have tested positive again, talk to your doctor to see what you need to do.

Please help slow the spread of COVID-19 by answering the phone if you get a call or text from the Saint Louis County Department of Public Health.

¹ Due to the rising number of cases of COVID-19 in St. Louis County and the inability for the Department of Public Health (“DPH”) to contact all those requiring quarantine or isolation, DPH is providing the following instructions for isolation, contact tracing, and self-quarantine.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 ISOLATE: STAY HOME

You must stay home for at least 5 days and separate yourself from others until your home isolation ends.

- Stay away from household members.
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- If you must leave home to get essential medical care, drive yourself, if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, keep as much distance as possible between you and the driver and others (e.g. sit in the back seat), leave the windows down, and wear a mask, if possible.
- If someone from outside your household is shopping for you, ask them to leave the food and other supplies at your door, if possible. Pick them up after the person has left. If you need help finding free delivery services, social services, or essential items like food and medicines, call 2-1-1.

WHEN DOES MY HOME ISOLATION END?

If you had symptoms and tested positive for COVID-19 or if a healthcare provider thinks* that you have COVID-19, you must stay home until:

- At least 5 days have passed since your symptoms first started, and
- You have had no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers), and
- You do not have a runny nose, and
- You have no more than a minimal, non-productive cough (i.e., not disruptive to work and does not stop you from wearing a mask continuously, you are not coughing up phlegm), and
- Your symptoms have improved.

After your symptoms have resolved, you may leave your house while wearing a mask if around others. You must wear a mask for 10 days after you got tested.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but never had any symptoms:

- You must stay home for 5 days after the test was taken.
- After 5 days, if you have NO symptoms, you may leave your house wearing a mask.
- Continue to wear a mask consistently and correctly around others for 5 additional days upon leaving your house.
 - Masks should cover your nose & mouth. Masks should fit snug on your face.
 - Masks should be worn at all times when out & around others. If you must remove your facemask, (e.g. in order to eat or drink), you should separate yourself from others.
 - Consider switching to surgical masks, KN95 masks, or N95 masks if possible, during this time of high community transmission.

- Healthcare professionals should wear a respirator or well-fitting surgical facemask even when they are in non-patient care areas such as breakrooms or offices.
- Limit group gatherings & utilize protective measures like social distancing, good ventilation, masking, & handwashing.

*If a healthcare provider initially thought your symptoms were due to COVID-19 but they reassessed your diagnosis and concluded that you are not infected, you can stop isolating once 24 hours have passed since you have been fever-free without using fever-reducing medications. However, if you are in quarantine (because you are a close contact to a person with COVID-19) you must stay in quarantine for the required duration, based on your vaccination status.

WORK AND SCHOOL

- If you work or study in a setting where you could have gotten COVID-19 or passed it on to others, please tell your workplace or school so that they can advise others to test and/or quarantine as needed.
- If you are unable to work because you or a family member must isolate or quarantine, you can find information about disability insurance, unemployment and paid family leave at <https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus>.

WHAT TO DO WHEN HOME ISOLATION ENDS

- When you have completed your home isolation, you can return to in-person work or school with a mask. You must wear a mask while around others for 10 days after your positive test.
- Continue to stay 6 feet away from others and wear a face covering when you are in public settings where other people are present.

QUARANTINE: TELL YOUR CLOSE CONTACTS THAT THEY NEED TO QUARANTINE

If you have a test positive for COVID-19, you must notify your close contacts that they could be infected and may need to quarantine for at least 5 days starting from the last time they saw you. Their quarantine period will depend on their vaccination status.

Instructions for home quarantine can be found here.

Depending on their vaccination status, your close contacts may need to quarantine even if they feel well.

DEFINITION OF A CLOSE CONTACT

A “close contact” is any of the following people who were exposed to you while you were infectious:*

1. Any person who was within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
2. Any person who had unprotected contact with your body fluids and/or secretions. For example, you coughed or sneezed on them; you shared utensils, a cup, or saliva with them; or they cared for you without wearing appropriate protective equipment.

* You are considered to be infectious (you can spread COVID-19 to others) from 2 days before your symptoms first appeared until your home isolation ends. If you tested positive for COVID-19 but never had any symptoms, you are considered to be infectious from 2 days before your test was taken until at least 5 days after your test.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

HOME CARE

Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home. Here are steps that you can take to help you get better:

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain. Children younger than 2 should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.

SEEKING MEDICAL CARE

Stay in touch with your doctor and seek medical care if your symptoms get worse. If you are older than 65 or have an **underlying medical condition**, it is especially important to call your doctor as you may be at a higher risk of serious illness.

CALL 911 IF THERE ARE EMERGENCY WARNING SIGNS

People with emergency warning signs should call 911. If it's not urgent, call your doctor before visiting. You may be able to get advice by phone.

- Difficulty Breathing
- Pressure or Pain in Chest
- Bluish Lips or Face
- Confused or Hard to Wake

- Other Serious Symptoms

People with emergency warning signs should call 911. If it's not urgent, call your doctor before visiting. You may be able to get advice by phone.

PROTECT OTHERS

Follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to others in your home and your community.

SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM OTHERS IN YOUR HOME

- If you need to be in the same room as other people, set it up so that you can stay 6 feet apart as much as possible. It is important to stay away from people who are at **higher risk of serious illness**.
- If you have more than one bathroom, designate one for the sick person. If this is not possible, disinfect the bathroom after use (see cleaning information below).
- Open windows or use a fan or an air conditioner in shared spaces in the home.
- Do not allow non-essential visitors.
- Do not handle pets or other animals.

Anyone in your home who continues to be in close contact with you while you are in isolation will need to **stay in quarantine** for the whole time you are in isolation and begin their quarantine countdown based on the positive person's last day of isolation (day 5) or their last day of symptoms (whichever is later).

WEAR A FACE MASK OR CLOTH FACE COVER WHEN YOU ARE AROUND OTHERS

- Wear a face mask at any time when you are around other people.
- Anyone who needs to enter the same room as you should also wear a face mask. After leaving the room, they should immediately clean their hands, remove their face mask, and clean their hands again.
- *Use masks and face coverings with caution with children.* Infants and children under 2 should not wear cloth face coverings. Those between the ages of 2 and 8 should use them under adult supervision to ensure that the child can breathe safely and avoid choking or suffocation.
- See **CDC Guidance** for more information.

COVER YOUR COUGHS AND SNEEZES

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can after each use. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after you cough or sneeze.

AVOID SHARING FOOD OR PERSONAL HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- Do not prepare or serve food to others.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.
- Make sure to wash your dishes, drinking glasses, and eating utensils with soap and water after each use.

CLEAN YOUR HANDS OFTEN

- Wash your hands often, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; before eating or preparing food; and after touching your face mask or cover. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub hands together for 30 seconds until they feel dry.

CLEAN AND DISINFECT ALL “HIGH-TOUCH” SURFACES EVERY DAY

- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces that may have body fluids on them.
- Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes. Be sure to follow the product label instructions.
- If caregivers and household contacts clean or come into contact with your body fluids or secretions, they should wear a disposable face mask and gloves. After cleaning, they should remove and dispose of their gloves first, clean their hands, then remove and dispose of their face mask, and clean their hands again.

See CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Households](#) and [Caring for Someone Sick at Home](#) for more detailed guidance.

TALK TO PUBLIC HEALTH - CASE INVESTIGATION AND CONTACT TRACING

Case investigation and contact tracing is a simple, confidential process that is being used to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

- If you test positive for COVID-19, you may receive a call or text from a public health specialist. Please do your part by taking the call and answering some questions about the places you have been and the people you have been around while you were infectious.

- The people you tell the specialist about will be contacted and asked to stay home to help prevent others from getting sick. They will not be told your name or contact information. The specialist will also answer any questions you may have and share information about services.