What to do if you were exposed to COVID-19

If you had close contact with a person with COVID-19, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recommends that you stay at home (self-quarantine) for 14 days after the last time you had close contact with the person with COVID-19 even if your COVID-19 test is negative and keep distance between yourself and others. If you are a healthcare worker or critical infrastructure worker, talk to your employer or the health department for instructions specific to your job.

Close contact includes:

- Being within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- Providing care at home to someone sick with COVID-19.
- Having direct physical contact with someone with COVID-19 (touching, hugging, or kissing).
- Sharing eating or drinking utensils with someone who has COVID-19.
- Being sneezed or coughed on by someone who has COVID-19.

Close contact does not include:

- Briefly walking by or being briefly in the same room as a person with COVID-19. This does not generally put you at a higher risk of being exposed.

Stay home and monitor your health for 14 days

Monitor your health and be aware of the symptoms of COVID-19 including:

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If you have more questions about COVID-19, contact 877-ASK-VDH3 (877-275-8343)

If you are having a medical emergency call 911

Updated 10/27/2020
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Answer the call

- Your local health department will reach out to you with more recommendations if you are identified as a close contact during contact tracing.

Get tested

- Contact your local healthcare provider to ask about getting tested because of your exposure. There are many testing sites available in Virginia where you can get tested. Schedule an appointment online or call ahead and wear a mask (also known as a cloth face covering) when you leave your home.
- Even if you test negative during your self-quarantine period, you will still need to complete your full 14-day quarantine before it is safe to go back to work or be around others.

Stay home and away from others (self-quarantine)

- Avoid contact with others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- If you must go out or be around others, keep at least 6 feet between yourself and others and wear a mask.
- Do not go to work or school.
- Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.
- Your local health department can assist you with making sure your basic needs (e.g., food or medication) are being met.

Monitor your health

- Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day (once in the morning and once at night) and watch for fever.
- Watch for other signs and symptoms of COVID-19 such as cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.
- You can download VDH's Daily Symptom Monitoring Log to help keep track of your symptoms.

How long do you need to stay home?

- You need to self-quarantine and stay home for 14 days since your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you live with someone with COVID-19 and continue to have close contact in the household, you will need to self-quarantine for 14 days after that person is no longer contagious.
  - Someone with COVID-19 is considered no longer contagious after 10 days have passed since they first had symptoms (or 10 days since their first test specimen collection if they never had symptoms) and they have not had a fever for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication and their symptoms have improved*.

*Note that loss of taste or smell might persist for weeks or months and should not delay the end of isolation.

How to get a test

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