Isolation and Quarantine

What’s the Difference?

Isolation
The separation of people with COVID-19 from others.
People in isolation need to stay home and separate themselves from others in the home as much as possible, until it is safe to be around others.

Quarantine
The separation of people who were in close contact with a person with COVID-19 (i.e., had a possible exposure) from others.
People in quarantine should stay home and monitor their health closely in case they become ill, until it is safe to be around others. There are some exceptions (i.e., for people who are up to date with their vaccines or have recently recovered).

When is it safe to resume normal activities?

I was sick with COVID-19
It is safe to end home isolation when:
At least 5 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared
AND
You haven’t had a fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of medication) and other signs of illness are improving.

I was diagnosed with COVID-19 but never became sick
It is safe to end home isolation when:
At least 5 days have passed since the day your test specimen was collected.

If you end isolation after 5 days, you should follow all other recommendations and wear a well-fitting mask when around others for an additional 5 days.

The person I was in contact with lives outside my home
VDH recommends that you quarantine (stay home) for at least 5 days after your last close contact with the person with COVID-19.

The person I was in contact with lives with me
If you are not able to separate completely from the person with COVID-19, VDH recommends that you quarantine (stay home) for 5 days after the person with COVID-19 was allowed to end isolation.

Get tested
at about 5 days after your last exposure. If you had COVID-19 in the last 90 days you do not need testing.

If you end quarantine after 5 days, you should still monitor for symptoms, follow all other recommendations and wear a well-fitting mask when around others for an additional 5 days.