WHEN IS IT SAFE TO BE AROUND OTHERS: ISOLATION AND WHEN TO END ISOLATION*

If you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19, you should isolate (stay home and away from others)

- This applies when you have a positive COVID-19 test – even if you have been vaccinated and even if you do not have symptoms. It also applies when you have symptoms and are waiting on a test result or are unable to get tested.
- Stay home for at least 5 days (Days 0–5)
  → If you have symptoms, count the day that your first symptom appeared as Day 0
  → If you do not have symptoms, count the day that you got tested as Day 0
- During isolation at home:
  → Monitor your health and contact your healthcare provider if your symptoms worsen
  → Separate yourself from other people and pets as much as possible
  → Wear a high-quality mask if you cannot separate from others
  → Stay in a separate “sick room” and use a separate bathroom, if possible
  → Do not go to public settings or travel
  → Take steps to improve ventilation at home, if possible

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, you can end isolation (leave your home) after Day 5 if these things have happened:

- At least 5 full days have passed since symptoms first appeared, and
- You are fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and
- Your other symptoms have improved
  → Note that loss of taste and smell might persist for weeks or months and this should not delay the end of isolation.

If you did not have COVID-19 symptoms, you can end isolation (leave your home) after Day 5 if this has happened:

- At least 5 full days have passed since you were tested

If you end isolation after Day 5, you should still follow these steps on Days 6–10:

- Wear a high-quality mask around others at home and in public. Visit CDC’s website to see how you might be able to stop wearing a mask earlier.
- Do not travel, avoid people who have weakened immune systems or who are at high risk for severe COVID-19, avoid places where you are unable to wear a mask, and avoid other people when you are eating.

*Based on CDC guidance for Isolation. This VDH guidance applies to general community settings, including K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and workplaces. Child care facilities may apply this guidance for children ages 2 years and older and staff who can consistently and correctly wear well-fitting masks. It does not apply to healthcare facilities or high-risk congregate settings (e.g., correctional and detention facilities, homeless shelters, or cruise ships). People with severe COVID-19 or weakened immune systems might need to isolate (stay home) longer than 10 days. They should talk with their healthcare provider about when it is safe to be around others.