

COVID-19 Patient Guidance: Notifying Your Close Contacts

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or suspect you have COVID-19, you can help prevent spreading it to others by notifying your close contacts and by following this guidance.



Isolate yourself

Individuals who test positive should immediately isolate. Isolation is used to separate people infected with COVID-19 from those who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. At home, anyone sick or infected should isolate from others. You can be around others five days after you test positive if you have no symptoms or your symptoms are improving and it's been 24 hours with no fever without use of fever-reducing medication. You should continue to wear a well-fitted mask around others at home and in public for five additional days (days 6-10) after the end of your five-day isolation period. If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for a full 10 days. Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk of severe disease, in nursing homes, and other high-risk settings until after at least 10 days.



Notify close contacts

A close contact is defined as any person within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. Close contacts are those who have been around you starting two days before symptoms began OR before taking a COVID-19 test, and were within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.



Keep others safe

Tell your close contacts: Call your friends, family, school and work. Those who are up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccination OR had COVID-19 in the past 90 days do not need to quarantine unless you develop symptoms. For those exposed and not up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccination, stay home and quarantine for 5 days from your last exposure. Everyone should get tested at least 5 days after exposure even if you don't have symptoms, and wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days while around others inside your home or in public.



When to seek medical attention

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, chills, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, headache, sore throat, loss of smell, and more. If your symptoms worsen and you feel you need care, contact your medical provider. You should seek emergency medical attention if you are experiencing severe chest pain or shortness of breath, unable to tolerate liquids, and/or intractable nausea or vomiting.



Get vaccinated

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone age 5 and older and boosters for everyone 12 years and older. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities and hospitals.