



COVID-19: Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts

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For the latest version of this guidance, please check: ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine

INTRODUCTION

Quarantine is used to keep someone who has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. In Los Angeles County, if you have been in close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 you are required to quarantine unless you are exempt¹. Even if you do not have to quarantine, you are still required to take other steps – see below.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS

What is a Close Contact?

You are a “close contact” if you were exposed to someone who tested positive* for COVID-19 while they were infectious² if:

- a. You were within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- b. You had unprotected contact with body fluids and/or secretions from someone with COVID-19. For example, you were coughed or sneezed on, you shared a drinking cup or eating utensils, you kissed, or you provided care to them without wearing the right protective equipment.

* Tested positive means they had a positive COVID-19 viral test.

YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO QUARANTINE (you are exempt) if you do not have symptoms AND you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines. This means that you are either:

- fully vaccinated and boosted or
- fully vaccinated but not yet eligible for a booster.

You must still follow the other steps below.

1 QUARANTINE (unless you are exempt)

- You must quarantine (stay home and away from others)
 - You can end quarantine after Day 5 if you have no symptoms and you have a negative diagnostic test that was collected on Day 5 or later.

¹ You are not required to quarantine (you are exempt) if you **do not have symptoms** AND you are up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines. Up to date on your COVID-19 vaccines mean that you are either: fully vaccinated and boosted, OR fully vaccinated but not yet booster-eligible.

² A person with COVID-19 is considered to be able to spread the virus to others (infectious):

- if symptomatic-- from 2 days before their symptoms first started until their isolation period ends OR
- if symptoms never develop--from 2 days before their positive viral test was taken until their isolation period ends

- If you do not test, you can end quarantine on Day 10 as long as you do not have symptoms. Note: Day 0 is the day of your last contact (exposure) with the infected person. Day 1 is the first full day after your last exposure.

2 TEST

- You should test immediately. If your test is negative, you should test again on Day 5 after your last exposure.
 - If either test is positive, you must isolate immediately. Follow the instructions at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation.
 - For information about how to get a test, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidtests.

3 MONITOR YOUR HEALTH

- Monitor your health for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days after your last exposure.
- If you develop symptoms³, you must isolate and test immediately.
 - if your test is positive, continue to isolate. Follow the instructions at ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation. Your isolation period begins the day that your symptoms start.
 - If your test is negative, you can leave home once you have completed your quarantine period and you have been fever-free for 24 hours.

4 WEAR A MASK

- Wear a well-fitting mask while around others, indoors and outdoors for 10 days after your last exposure.
 - Adults should wear a well-fitting medical grade mask (surgical or respirator).
 - Children should wear a well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.

When does my first day of quarantine start?

Day 1 is the first full day after your last contact with the infected person.

- If you live with or care for a person with COVID-19 and cannot avoid close contact with them while they are still in isolation you must quarantine. To calculate the end of your quarantine, use the day after the infected person ends isolation as your Day 1.
- If you received a [Public Health Emergency Quarantine Order](#) and you don't know when you were exposed to the infected person, use the date the order was issued as the date of your last contact with the infected person.

Restrictions during quarantine

To prevent you from spreading COVID-19, you must restrict activities and limit actions that may put you in contact with others.

- Stay home. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Only leave your place of quarantine to get medical care and don't allow non-essential visitors.

³ Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. *This list does not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms. Visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare to learn more about what to do if you are sick.* Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are having serious symptoms. Serious symptoms include difficulty breathing, pain or pressure in your chest, have bluish lips or face or being confused or having difficulty waking up.

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- Separate yourself from others in your home (unless they are also in quarantine). If you need to be in the same room as other household members, in addition to wearing your mask:
 - Keep 6 feet away. If you have to share a room, try setting up the room so that you can stay 6 feet apart, if possible. It is important to stay away from people who are not fully vaccinated and those who are at [higher risk of serious illness](#).
 - Open windows to outdoor air (if safe to do so) to [improve ventilation](#) or use air filters and exhaust fans.
 - Use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, disinfect the bathroom after use.
- Do not make or serve food to others, if possible. If there is no one else to prepare and serve food, then be sure to wear a mask and wash your hands frequently.
- [Wash or sanitize your hands](#) often.
- Clean or disinfect high touch surfaces often, especially if you must share spaces with other household members.
- If you need help getting food or other supplies, call 2-1-1, or visit [211LA.org](#), or visit the Public Health [resource webpage](#).
- If you are experiencing homelessness or are unable to safely isolate or quarantine at home, call the COVID Info line 833-540-0473, open daily 8:00am–8:30pm.

When returning to work or school

- You do not need a letter from Public Health to return to work or school.
- If you were exposed to COVID-19 at work, check with your employer to see when you can return to work.
- For more information on COVID-19 related work issues, view the [COVID-19 Safety Workers Rights in California Pamphlet](#).

Recent travel: For information about testing and quarantine after travel follow CDC [domestic](#) and [international](#) travel recommendations. See [LAC DPH Travel Advisory and Guidance](#) for more details.

CONTACT TRACING

Contact tracing is a simple, confidential process that is being used to help slow the spread of COVID-19. If you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 you should expect a call from a public health specialist.

- If you received a Los Angeles County Health Officer Quarantine Order and have not already had a contact tracing interview, you must call the number on the Order within 24 hours.
- If you get a call or message from "LA PublicHealth" or 1-833-641-0305, please do your part by taking the call. You will be asked about your health and the places you have been.
- The public health specialist can answer your questions and provide information like how to get a COVID-19 test or how to find a doctor or get help while you are in quarantine.
- Discussions with public health specialist are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your doctor.
- Click [here](#) for more information about contact tracing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- For more information, visit the Public Health website ph.lacounty.gov/Coronavirus or call 2-1-1 (which is available 24/7).
- Please call your doctor for any questions about your health. If you need help finding a doctor, call 2-1-1.
- **Dealing with stress**
 - COVID-19 and quarantine may be stressful for people. Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage (211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health) for local resources to help with mental health & wellbeing concerns. Guidance and resources, including information on crisis hotlines, are also available on the CDC webpage [Coping with stress](#).
 - LA County residents have free access to iPrevail.com, an online mental health resource to help with life's everyday stressors. After a short assessment, you are connected to customized support which may include on-demand chat with peer coaches, self-paced lessons to improve wellbeing, and community support groups. iPrevail is available 24/7 offered in English and Spanish.
 - If you need to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at (800) 854-7771. This number is available 24/7. You can also text "LA" to 74174.