



# COVID-19: Instructions for Close Contacts

## SUMMARY

If you are a [close contact](#) to someone with COVID-19 and you have no symptoms:

- 1 Wear a well-fitting mask indoors around others for 10 days**
- 2 Get tested 3-5 days after you were last exposed**  
If your test result was positive, isolate.  
**Note:** if you had a positive COVID test within the last 30 days testing is not recommended unless you have symptoms. [Learn more](#).
- 3 Monitor your health for 10 days**  
If symptoms start, test right away and stay home away from others. If you test positive, follow isolation requirements at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

### What is a Close Contact?

**You are a "close contact" if you shared the same indoor airspace with someone with COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while they were infectious.\***

Examples of indoor airspaces are homes, waiting rooms, airplanes. An example of "a total of 15 minutes or more" is being in the same airspace with the person for 5 minutes at least 3 different times in 24 hours.

\*A person is considered to be infectious (meaning they can spread COVID-19 to others) from 2 days before their symptoms began until they meet criteria to end isolation. If they test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms, they are considered to be infectious from 2 days before their test was taken through Day 5.

Note: A different definition of a close contact may be used if you are exposed at work, school, or very large indoor spaces.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR CLOSE CONTACTS

**As long as you do not have symptoms, you do not need to stay away from others. You should take the following steps lower the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others.**

*To count the days:* Day 0 is the day of your last contact (exposure) with the infected person.



### **Wear a well-fitting mask around others indoors through Day 10**

This is especially important when you are around people at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. See [ph.lacounty.gov/masks](https://ph.lacounty.gov/masks) for more details about masks that offer the best protection.



## Test for COVID-19 3-5 days after your last exposure

In addition, it is recommended that you get tested right away if you or someone you live with is at [higher risk for severe illness](#). If you test negative before Day 3, retest again between Days 3 and 5, with at least 24 hours between the first and second test.

If you test positive at any time, you must stay home away from others and follow isolation requirements at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation). Note: it is recommended that negative results from antigen tests, including self-tests should be repeated, see [FDA instructions on repeat testing](#).

## If you tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days

If you are a contact to someone with COVID-19:

- If you *have symptoms* of COVID-19, test right away using antigen tests.
- If you *do not have symptoms* of COVID-19:
  - You *should* get tested if your first positive test was 31-90 days ago. It is best to use antigen tests.
  - Testing is *not* recommended if your first positive test was 30 days ago or less.

## Monitor your health through Day 10



If you develop symptoms, stay home away from others, get tested, and ask about free COVID-19 treatment (see box below). If you test positive or your doctor diagnoses you with COVID-19, you must follow isolation requirements at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

If you test negative, follow LAC DPH COVID-19 guidance at [Learn about Symptoms and What to do If you are Sick](#).

## If you have symptoms, ask about COVID-19 treatment

COVID-19 treatment can prevent people with early COVID-19 infection from getting very sick. Many adults and some children qualify for free medicines, such as Paxlovid. The oral medicines must be started within 5 days from the start of your symptoms. Talk to your doctor or call the Public Health Tele-Health Service (1-833-540-0473 – open 7 days a week, 8:00 am – 8:30 pm) to see if treatment is right for you, even if you test negative. Tell them you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. See [ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines) to learn more.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- If you need help finding a doctor, call 2-1-1.
- Workers:
  - Site-specific guidance for workers in healthcare settings: [Healthcare workers](#) | [EMS personnel](#) | [Long-term care centers](#) | [Adult and senior care facilities](#).
  - Workplace return to work (non-healthcare) requirements. See Table 2 in [Employees Exposed to COVID-19: Return to Work](#).

- Mental health resources:
  - Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LAC DMH) 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-854-7771.
  - Local mental health & wellbeing resources are available on the LAC DMH [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage [211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health](https://211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health). More information, including a list of crisis hotlines, is available on the CDC webpage [Coping with Stress](#).
  - LA County residents have free access to [iPrevail.com](https://iPrevail.com), an online mental health resource in English and Spanish. Features include on-demand chat with trained peer coaches, community support groups, and self-paced lessons to help with life's everyday stressors.