



## COVID-19

# Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and helps protect you, your family, and your community.

Updated Jan. 11, 2022

CDC has updated [isolation and quarantine](#) recommendations for the public, and is revising the CDC website to reflect these changes. These recommendations do not apply to [healthcare personnel](#) and do not supersede state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.

## Contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19

Contact tracing helps protect you, your family, and your community by:

- Helping people diagnosed with COVID-19 get referrals for services and resources they may need to safely [isolate](#).
- Notifying people who have come into [close contact](#) with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 and helping them determine what steps to take, depending on their vaccination status and history of prior infection with SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19). Follow-up may include [testing](#), [quarantine](#), and wearing a [well-fitted mask](#).
- Discussions with public health workers 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 healthcare provider.

### Answer the Call – Contact Tracing Video

 [View Transcript](#)  [Low Resolution Video](#)

This 1-minute animation video informs the public about contact tracing and why they should answer and respond to a call from a contact tracer.

[English](#)  
[Español](#)

During contact tracing, the health department staff **will not** ask you for:

- Money
- Social Security number
- Bank account information
- Salary information
- Credit card numbers

## What to do if you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19

- A public health worker, other professional, or the person you came into [close contact](#) with may tell you that you are a close contact and have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Follow [recommendations](#) for quarantine, testing, and wearing a [well-fitting mask](#). Quarantine recommendations vary based on up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination status or history of prior COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days.
- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- If you develop symptoms, get tested immediately and [isolate](#) from others. If your test result is positive, follow [recommendations](#) to isolate.
- If you need help, health department staff can provide information about the [best time](#) to get a vaccine and resources for [COVID-19 testing](#) in your area.

## What to do if you are waiting for a COVID-19 test result or if you are diagnosed with COVID-19

### If you are waiting for COVID-19 test results

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#### Stay away from others:

##### Quarantine

- [Stay away from others](#) while waiting for your COVID-19 test result, especially people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19, if possible.
- If you have come into close contact with someone with COVID-19 follow [recommendations](#) to quarantine and wear a [well-fitting mask](#). Quarantine recommendations vary based on up-to-date vaccination status or history of prior COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days.

#### Think about your close contacts:

While you wait for your COVID-19 test result, think about anyone you have come into [close contact](#) with starting 2 days before your symptoms began (or two days before you test if you do not have symptoms). This information can help with [contact tracing](#) efforts and help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.

Use [this resource](#)  [2 Pages, 230 KB] to help you think of people you may have been around while you may have had COVID-19.

### If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 or have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19

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#### Stay away from others:

##### Isolate

Stay at home away from others ([isolate](#)), except to get medical care.

- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Stay in a separate room, away from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Avoid contact with other household members and [pets](#).
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a well-fitting [mask](#) if you must be around other people.
- Follow recommendations for [isolation](#).

#### Think about your close contacts:

[Tell your close contacts](#) that you have COVID-19 right away so that they can follow [recommendations](#) to quarantine, get tested and wear a well-fitting mask depending on their vaccination and booster status or history of prior infection

tested, and wear a mask when necessary, depending on their vaccination and booster status or history of prior infection.

- An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 2 days before the person has any [symptoms](#) or tests positive. People who have COVID-19 don't always have obvious symptoms.
- A person is still considered a [close contact](#) even if they were wearing a mask while they were less than six feet from someone with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
  - You can call, text, or email your contacts. By letting your [close contacts](#) know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.
  - If you would like to stay anonymous, there is also an online tool that allows you to [tell your contacts](#) by sending out emails or text notifications anonymously ([tellyourcontacts.org](https://tellyourcontacts.org) [↗](#)).
  - There are [exceptions](#) to the close contact definition in K-12 indoor classroom settings


## Answer the call

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If a public health worker from the health department calls you, [answer the call](#) to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in your community.

- Discussions with public health workers 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 healthcare provider.
- Your name will not be shared with those you came in contact with, even if they ask. The public health worker will only notify people you were in [close contact](#) with that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Public health workers may be able to connect you with other supportive services that can help you isolate or quarantine.

## Additional Resources

- › [Contact Tracing Steps Infographic](#)
- › [How to Talk to Your Close Contacts](#) 
- › [Contact Tracing Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#)
- › [Contact Tracing Easy to Read Messages](#)