COVID-19

How To Talk To Your Close Contacts

Updated Jan. 14, 2022

It's important for you to **tell your close contacts** that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 so they can quarantine, get tested, and wear a well-fitting mask. If they are infected, they could spread COVID-19 starting 2 days before they have any symptoms or test positive. By letting your close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect them and everyone around them. Recommendations for close contacts vary depending on whether they are up to date with their COVID vaccinations or had confirmed COVID-19 within the 90 days prior to close contact. Someone is still considered a close contact even if they were wearing a mask while they were around you.

For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who was less than 6 feet away from you for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

- An infected person can transmit SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, starting 48 hours (2 days) before they have symptoms or before they were tested.
  - People who are infected but do not show symptoms (asymptomatic) and those who do not yet have symptoms (pre-symptomatic) can spread the virus to others.

Who Are Your Close Contacts?

Close contacts are people you have been around (less than 6 feet away for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) during the two-day period before you first had symptoms OR if you do not have symptoms, two days before you were tested for COVID-19, through to the time you started isolation. They are at greatest risk of infection and therefore need to be notified as soon as possible.

Make A List Of Close Contacts To Notify. Think About:

- Who lives with you?
- Have you gone to work or school?
- Have you gotten together with others (eaten out at a restaurant, gone out for drinks, exercised with others or gone to a gym, had friends or family over to your house, volunteered, gone to a party, pool, or park)?
- Have you gone to a store in person (for example, the grocery store, mall)?

- Have you gone to in-person appointments (for example, the salon, barber, doctor's or dentist's office)?
- Have you ridden in a car with others (for example, using rideshare apps) or taken public transportation?
- Have you been inside a church, synagogue, mosque or other places of worship?

How to Notify People You Have Been Around That They May Have Been Exposed To COVID−19

By letting your close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect them and others within your community. You can call, text, or email your contacts. **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 ⬈).

An Example of What to Say to Your Close Contacts:

"Hi. I need to talk to you about something important. Do you have a few minutes to talk privately? I was diagnosed with COVID-19 (or tested positive) on [xxx date]. We spent time together on [xxx date], and I wanted to let you know, so that you can follow recommendations to quarantine, get tested, or wear a mask to protect your family and others within and outside your household. CDC recommendations vary based on whether you are up to date with COVID vaccinations, or ever had COVID-19 before. You should monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19, get tested, and isolate away from others if you get symptoms or test positive."

How To Talk To Your Close Contacts

Download and print: How To Talk To Your Close Contacts: What To Do If You Have COVID-19 📄 [956 KB, 2 Pages]

More Information

Contact Tracing Steps Infographic

3 Key Steps to Take While Waiting for Your COVID-19 Test Results 📄 [2 Pages, 230 KB]

Contact Tracing

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