



COVID-19

How To Talk To Your Close Contacts

Updated Feb. 2, 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 (including family members, roommates, or overnight guests)?
- Who are your intimate partners?
- Who do you work or volunteer with outside of the home?
- Who were you with at an in-person meeting or gathering you attended?
- Who have you gotten together with recently (visited in their home, eaten out at a restaurant, gone out for drinks, exercised with or gone to a gym with, had over to your house, gone to a party with)?
- Who has provided services in your home, like a home health aide, nurse, childcare provider, house cleaner, or maintenance professional?
- Who have you visited in the hospital, a nursing home, or a jail or prison?
- Who has provided you or another person in your home with medical or dental care?
- Who have you had an in-person appointment with recently (for example, a hair salon, barber, tattoo parlor, nail salon)?
- Who have you ridden with in a personal vehicle recently?
- Who have you played sports with recently, or worked with on an arts-related group activity such as a concert, musical, or play?
- Who have you interacted with at a place 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.”

More Information

[Contact Tracing](#)

[How to Talk To Your Close Contacts \(cdc.gov\)](#)  [125 KB, 2 pages]

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