

DEFINITION

- Exposed to a person who has been **diagnosed** (confirmed by testing) or **suspected** to have COVID-19.
- Patient is well and has no common COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., cough, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches).
- Questions about COVID-19.

A COVID-19 **Exposure** is defined as:

- **Living in the same house** with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case.
- **Being within 6 feet (2 meters)** of a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case for a total of **15 minutes or more** during a 24-hour period. Examples of such close contact include kissing or hugging, sharing eating or drinking utensils, carpooling, close conversation, or performing a physical examination (relevant to healthcare providers).
- OR having **direct contact with infectious secretions** of a confirmed COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

The following **risk factors** increase the chance of getting sick with COVID-19 after an exposure:

- **How Close?** The closer you are to someone with COVID-19, the greater the chance of catching it. Being within 6 feet (2 meters) of an infected person increases the risk. Being in a crowded place also increases the risk.
- **How Long?** Longer exposure time increases a person's risk of getting COVID-19. An exposure of 15 minutes or more is more likely to result in spread.
- **Where - Indoors or Outdoors?** Being outside reduces the risk because there is better air movement.
- **Did the Infected Person Have Symptoms?** If the person was sick with such symptoms as cough, fever, or trouble breathing, it increases the exposed person's risk of getting COVID-19.
- **Who Was Wearing Masks?** Wearing a well-fitting mask can decrease a person's risk of getting COVID-19. If both the infected and exposed person were wearing well-fitting masks, the risk of spread is low. If only one was masked, the risk is moderate. If neither was masked, the risk is higher.

The following are not an exposure:

- Walking by a person who has COVID-19.
- Being outdoors and keeping safe distancing (6 feet; 2 meters).

Note to Triager:

- Patients with cough, fever, shortness of breath, or other compatible COVID symptoms should be suspected as having COVID-19.
- Triagers should use their clinical judgment, but generally will want to use the *COVID-19 - Diagnosed or Suspected* guideline when a patient calls with cough, shortness of breath, or a combination of typical COVID symptoms and there is community spread. *Exception:* If the patient has flu-like symptoms and lives with someone who has influenza (positive test), the triager should use the *Influenza - Seasonal* protocol.

• *Up-to-date on vaccination* means that a person has received all doses in the primary series and got all recommended booster shots. For people with moderately to severely weak immune systems up-to-date means they received all recommended primary shots and boosters. Depending on the person's age and the vaccine given, this group may require an extra primary shot (e.g., third shot) and booster.

Updated: September 7, 2022 (version 18)

INITIAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. COVID-19 EXPOSURE: "Please describe how you were exposed to someone with a COVID-19 infection."
2. PLACE of CONTACT: "Where were you when you were exposed to COVID-19?" (e.g., home, school, medical waiting room; which city?)
3. TYPE of CONTACT: "How much contact was there?" (e.g., sitting next to, live in same house, work in same office, same building)
4. DURATION of CONTACT: "How long were you in contact with the COVID-19 patient?" (e.g., a few seconds, passed by person, a few minutes, 15 minutes or longer, live with the patient)
5. MASK: "Were you wearing a mask?" "Was the other person wearing a mask?" Note: wearing a mask reduces the risk of an otherwise close contact.
6. DATE of CONTACT: "When did you have contact with a COVID-19 patient?" (e.g., how many days ago)
7. COMMUNITY SPREAD: "Are there lots of cases of COVID-19 (community spread) where you live?" (See public health department website, if unsure)
8. SYMPTOMS: "Do you have any symptoms?" (e.g., fever, cough, breathing difficulty, loss of taste or smell)
9. VACCINE: "Have you gotten the COVID-19 vaccine?" If Yes, ask: "Which one, how many shots, when did you get it?"
10. BOOSTER: "Have you received your COVID-19 booster?" If Yes, ask: "Which one and when did you get it?"
11. PREGNANCY OR POSTPARTUM: "Is there any chance you are pregnant?" "When was your last menstrual period?" "Did you deliver in the last 2 weeks?"
12. HIGH RISK: "Do you have any heart or lung problems?" (e.g., asthma, COPD, heart failure) "Do you have a weak immune system or other risk factors?" (e.g., HIV positive, chemotherapy, renal failure, diabetes mellitus, sickle cell anemia, obesity)
13. TRAVEL: "Have you traveled out of the country recently?" If Yes, ask: "When and where?" Note: Travel becomes less relevant if there is widespread community transmission where the patient lives.

TRIAGE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (TAQs)

See More Appropriate Guideline

COVID-19 lab test positive

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Diagnosed or Suspected (Adult)

[1] Lives with someone known to have influenza (flu test positive) AND [2] flu-like symptoms (e.g., cough, runny nose, sore throat, SOB; with or without fever)

Go to Guideline: Influenza - Seasonal (Adult). Note: Patient is more likely to have flu than COVID-19 if they are living with someone who tested positive for influenza.

[1] Symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, fever, SOB, or others) AND [2] doctor (or NP/PA) diagnosed COVID-19 based on symptoms

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Diagnosed or Suspected (Adult). Note: Triager should use clinical judgment to decide whether a symptom guideline (e.g., Chest Pain, Fever, Headache) should also be used in adult patients.

[1] Symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, fever, SOB, or others) AND [2] within 14 days of COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Diagnosed or Suspected (Adult). Note: Triager should use clinical judgment to decide whether a symptom guideline (e.g., Chest Pain, Fever, Headache) should also be used in adult patients.

[1] Symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., cough, fever, SOB, or others) AND [2] within 14 days of being in a high risk area for COVID-19 community spread (identified by CDC)

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Diagnosed or Suspected (Adult). Note: Triager should use clinical judgment to decide whether a symptom guideline (e.g., Chest Pain, Fever, Headache) should also be used in adult patients.

[1] Difficulty breathing (shortness of breath) occurs AND [2] onset > 14 days after COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Go to Guideline: Breathing Difficulty (Adult)

[1] Dry cough occurs AND [2] onset > 14 days after COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Go to Guideline: Cough - Acute Non-Productive (Adult)

[1] Wet cough (i.e., white-yellow, yellow, green, or rusty colored sputum) AND [2] onset > 14 days after COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Go to Guideline: Cough - Acute Productive (Adult)

[1] Common cold symptoms AND [2] onset > 14 days after COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Go to Guideline: Common Cold (Adult)

COVID-19 vaccine reaction suspected (e.g., fever, headache, muscle aches) occurring during days 1 to 3 after getting vaccine

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Vaccine Questions and Reactions (Adult)

COVID-19 vaccine, questions about

Go to Guideline: COVID-19 - Vaccine Questions and Reactions (Adult)

Call PCP Within 24 Hours

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE within last 14 days AND [2] needs COVID-19 lab test to return to work AND [3] NO symptoms

Reason: COVID-19 viral test is recommended, return to work clearance. Employee may need to discuss with their employee health department.

CA: 50, 32, 614, 27, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 20, 26, 1

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE within last 14 days AND [2] exposed person is a first responder (e.g., police or paramedic) AND [3] NO symptoms

Reason: COVID-19 viral test is recommended; exposed first responder; employee health should be notified.

CA: 50, 27, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 617, 29, 20, 26, 1

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE within last 14 days AND [2] exposed person is a healthcare worker who was NOT using all recommended personal protective equipment (e.g., a respirator-N95 mask, eye protection, gloves, and gown) AND [3] NO symptoms

Reason: COVID-19 viral test is recommended; exposed healthcare worker; employee health should be notified.

CA: 50, 27, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 617, 29, 20, 26, 1

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE within last 14 days AND [2] weak immune system (e.g., HIV positive, cancer chemo, splenectomy, organ transplant, chronic steroids) AND [3] NO symptoms

Reason: High risk patient; post-exposure prophylaxis may be indicated depending on dominant variant.

CA: 50, 22, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 617, 20, 26, 1

[1] Living or working in a correctional facility, long-term care facility, or shelter (i.e., group setting; densely populated) AND [2] where an outbreak has occurred AND [3] NO symptoms

Reason: COVID-19 viral test is recommended when outbreaks occur in a group (congregate) setting.

CA: 50, 22, 32, 614, 27, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 617, 29, 20, 26, 1

Home Care

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE within last 14 days AND [2] NO symptoms

Note: Getting a COVID-19 viral test at least 5 days after exposure is recommended.

CA: 48, 13, 12, 1234, 1111, 1237, 617, 20, 1291, 1371, 26, 1

[1] COVID-19 EXPOSURE 15 or more days ago AND [2] NO symptoms

Reason: Asymptomatic for 14 days. Risk of developing COVID-19 infection is low.

CA: 48, 18, 1234, 1233, 1296, 1047, 1371, 90, 1

[1] International travel AND [2] arrived home within last 14 days

Note: Getting a COVID-19 viral test 3 to 5 days after returning from international travel is recommended.

CA: 48, 11, 1234, 1237, 617, 20, 26, 1

[1] Does not meet COVID-19 EXPOSURE criteria BUT [2] living with someone who was exposed and who has no symptoms of COVID-19

Reason: No exposure, no symptoms.

CA: 48, 1235, 1234, 1233, 1296, 1047, 1048, 34, 35, 90, 1

[1] Does not meet COVID-19 EXPOSURE criteria BUT [2] caller still concerned about COVID-19 EXPOSURE

Reason: No exposure and needs reassurance.

CA: 48, 21, 617, 1234, 1233, 1296, 1047, 7, 1048, 1100, 90, 1

COVID-19 Testing, questions about

CA: 48, 1236, 1111, 1237, 617, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1071, 90, 1

COVID-19 Prevention and Healthy Living, questions about

Note: How to protect you and your family; keeping yourself healthy.

CA: 48, 1047, 1048, 1371, 1050, 611, 90, 1

COVID-19 Disease, questions about

Reason: No known exposure and no symptoms. Note: Refer most callers to CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus>.

CA: 48, 1235, 1234, 1233, 1296, 1047, 7, 617, 1048, 1100, 1291, 34, 35, 1371, 90, 1

CARE ADVICE (CA)

1. **Care Advice** given per COVID-19 - Exposure (Adult) guideline.

7. **COVID-19 - Travel Guidelines:**
 - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) maintains a website with the latest recommendations regarding travel and your health.
 - Currently the CDC recommends against travel to many geographic areas with widespread and ongoing spread of COVID-19. See current list at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.
 - *CDC Travel Health Website:* <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.
 - *CDC Travel FAQs:* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/faqs.html>.

11. **Reassurance and Education - Return From International Travel:**
 - **Get Tested:** You should get a viral COVID-19 test 3 to 5 days after arriving home from international travel.
 - **Watch for Symptoms:** Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 until 14 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - *Here is some more care advice and information that should help.*

12. **Reassurance and Education - COVID-19 Exposure and No Symptoms and ... You Had a Positive Test in Past 30 Days:**
 - **Wear a Mask:** Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.
 - **Watch for Symptoms:** Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 until 14 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - **No Quarantine:** You do not need to stay home unless you develop symptoms.
 - *Here is some more care advice and health information that should help.*

13. **Reassurance and Education - COVID-19 Exposure and No Symptoms:**
- **Get Tested:** Get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19. When counting days, remember that day 0 is the day you were last exposed. Day 1 is the next full day after the day you were exposed.
 - **Wear a Mask:** Wear a well-fitted mask for 10 full days any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.
 - **Watch for Symptoms:** Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 until 14 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - **No Quarantine:** You do not need to stay home unless you develop symptoms.
 - Up-to-date on vaccination means the person is fully vaccinated AND got all recommended booster shots. A person is also up-to-date if they are fully vaccinated but are not yet eligible for a booster. For people with moderately to severely weak immune systems up-to-date means they received all recommended primary shots and boosters. Depending on the person's age and the vaccine given, this group may require an extra primary shot (e.g., third shot) and booster.
 - *Here is some more care advice and health information that should help.*
18. **Reassurance and Education - No Symptoms and Day 15 or Later:**
- COVID-19 starts within 14 days of exposure.
 - The most common symptoms are cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
 - If you have not had any symptoms by day 15, you should be safe from getting COVID-19 from this exposure.
 - *Here is some more care advice and health information that should help.*
20. **COVID-19 - Home Isolation Needed if Symptoms Occur:**
- Isolation will be needed **if you develop symptoms** within 14 days of COVID-19 exposure:
 - ... **Stay at home for at least 5 full days** after symptoms started and until (1) fever has been gone for 24 hours (without using fever medicine) AND (2) your symptoms are better. Remember when counting days that day 0 is the day you first started having symptoms.
 - ... Wear a well-fitted **mask for 10 full days** any time you are around others inside your home or in public. Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask.
21. **Note to Triager - Caller Remains Worried After Education and Reassurance:**
- Encourage the caller to phone their doctor (or NP/PA) or public health department.
 - Discourage the caller from going to a healthcare facility unless warranted based on caller's symptoms.
22. **Alternate Disposition - Call Telemedicine Provider:**
- Telemedicine is often a good choice for care during this COVID-19 pandemic.
 - You can talk to a telemedicine provider, if your own doctor (or NP/PA) is not available.

26. **Call Back If:**
- Fever or feeling feverish occurs within 14 days of COVID-19 exposure
 - Cough or difficulty breathing occur within 14 days of COVID-19 exposure
 - Loss of taste or smell occur
 - Other symptoms you think might be from COVID-19 occur
 - You have more questions
27. **Alternate Disposition - Call Employee Health at Your Workplace Within 24 Hours:**
- You need to call and discuss this with the Employee Health Department for your workplace within the next 24 hours.
29. **COVID-19 - Should You Go to Work After Exposure?**
- You should **talk to the employee health office** at your workplace.
32. **Alternate Disposition - Department of Health:**
- Your local, state, or provincial Department of Health can help you find out how to get tested.
 - Visit their website to see your best options for testing.
34. **FAQ - Can Someone Spread the Virus Who Is Not Sick?**
- An infected person is thought to be most contagious during the day or two before they get sick and during the first several days after getting sick.
 - The virus spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person.
35. **FAQ - Can I Get COVID-19 From Touching an Infected Surface?**
- It is possible that a person could get COVID-19 by touching an object like a doorknob or a phone, or surfaces like a table or desk.
 - However, this is not the main way COVID-19 spreads.
 - You can use a household cleaning spray or wipe (e.g., Clorox or similar) to clean the object or surface. *Follow the label instructions.*
 - Remember, wash your hands often with soap and water.
40. **Call EMS 911 Now:**
- Immediate medical attention is needed. You need to hang up and call 911 (or an ambulance).
 - *Triager Discretion:* I'll call you back in a few minutes to be sure you were able to reach them.
41. **Go to ED Now:**
- You need to be seen in the Emergency Department.
 - Go to the ED at _____ Hospital.
 - Leave now. Drive carefully.

42. **Go to ED Now (or PCP Triage):**
- **If No PCP (Primary Care Provider) Second-Level Triage:** You need to be seen within the next hour. Go to the ED/UCC at _____ Hospital. Leave as soon as you can.
 - **If PCP Second-Level Triage Required:** You may need to be seen. Your doctor (or NP/PA) will want to talk with you to decide what's best. I'll page the provider on-call now. If you haven't heard from the provider (or me) within 30 minutes, go directly to the ED/UCC at _____ Hospital.
43. **See HCP (or PCP Triage) Within 4 Hours:**
- **If Office Will Be Open:** You need to be seen within the next 3 or 4 hours. Call your doctor (or NP/PA) now or as soon as the office opens.
 - **If Office Will Be Closed and No PCP (Primary Care Provider) Second-Level Triage:** You need to be seen within the next 3 or 4 hours. A nearby Urgent Care Center (UCC) is often a good source of care. Another choice is to go to the ED. Go sooner if you become worse.
 - **If Office Will Be Closed and PCP Second-Level Triage Required:** You may need to be seen. Your doctor (or NP/PA) will want to talk with you to decide what's best. I'll page the on-call provider now. If you haven't heard from the provider (or me) within 30 minutes, call again. **Note:** If on-call provider can't be reached, send to UCC or ED.
- Note to Triager:**
- Use nurse judgment to select the most appropriate source of care.
 - Consider both the urgency of the patient's symptoms AND what resources may be needed to evaluate and manage the patient.
- Sources of Care:**
- **ED:** Patients who may need surgery or hospital admission need to be sent to an ED. So do most patients with serious symptoms or complex medical problems.
 - **UCC:** Some UCCs can manage patients who are stable and have less serious symptoms (e.g., minor illnesses and injuries). The triager must know the UCC capabilities before sending a patient there. If unsure, call ahead.
 - **OFFICE:** If patient sounds stable and not seriously ill, consult PCP (or follow your office policy) to see if patient can be seen NOW in office.
44. **See PCP Within 24 Hours:**
- **If Office Will Be Open:** You need to be examined within the next 24 hours. Call your doctor (or NP/PA) when the office opens and make an appointment.
 - **If Office Will Be Closed:** You need to be seen within the next 24 hours. A clinic or an urgent care center is often a good source of care if your doctor's office is closed or you can't get an appointment.
 - **If Patient Has No PCP:** Refer patient to a clinic or urgent care center. Also try to help caller find a PCP for future care.
- Note to Triager:**
- Use nurse judgment to select the most appropriate source of care.
 - Consider both the urgency of the patient's symptoms AND what resources may be needed to evaluate and manage the patient.

45. **See PCP Within 3 Days:**
- You need to be seen within 2 or 3 days.
 - **PCP Visit:** Call your doctor (or NP/PA) during regular office hours and make an appointment. A clinic or urgent care center are good places to go for care if your doctor's office is closed or you can't get an appointment. **Note:** If office will be open tomorrow, tell caller to call then, not in 3 days.
 - **If Patient Has No PCP:** A clinic or urgent care center are good places to go for care if you do not have a primary care provider. **Note:** Try to help caller find a PCP for future care (e.g., use a physician referral line). Having a PCP or "medical home" means better long-term care.
46. **See PCP Within 2 Weeks:**
- You need to be seen for this ongoing problem within the next 2 weeks.
 - **PCP Visit:** Call your doctor (or NP/PA) during regular office hours and make an appointment.
 - **If Patient Has No PCP:** A primary care clinic is where you need to be seen for chronic health problems. **Note:** Try to help caller find a PCP (e.g., use a physician referral line). Having a PCP or "medical home" means better long-term care.
47. **Home Care - Information or Advice Only Call.**
48. **Home Care:**
- You should be able to treat this at home.
49. **Call PCP Now:**
- You need to discuss this with your doctor (or NP/PA).
 - I'll page the on-call provider now. If you haven't heard from the provider (or me) within 30 minutes, call again.
50. **Call PCP Within 24 Hours:**
- You need to discuss this with your doctor (or NP/PA) within the next 24 hours.
 - **If Office Will Be Open:** Call the office when it opens tomorrow morning.
 - **If Office Will Be Closed:** I'll page the on-call provider now. **Exception:** from 9 pm to 9 am. Since this isn't urgent, we'll hold the page until morning.
51. **Call PCP When Office Is Open:**
- You need to discuss this with your doctor (or NP/PA) within the next few days.
 - Call the office when it is open.
52. **Go to L&D Now:**
- You need to be seen.
 - Go to the Labor and Delivery Unit or the Emergency Department at _____ Hospital.
 - Leave now. Drive carefully.
54. **Call Local Agency Within 24 Hours:**
- You need to discuss these issues further with someone from a local agency.
 - Call them within the next 24 hours.

90. **Call Back If:**
- You have more questions
611. **Get a Flu Shot (Influenza Vaccine):**
- Protect yourself and your family from influenza by getting your annual flu shot (influenza vaccination).
 - All adults should get a flu shot every year. This year is more important than ever. *Reason:* Getting COVID-19 while you also have or are recovering from the flu may increase the chances of getting severe symptoms.
614. **Alternate Disposition - Local Clinic or Urgent Care Center:**
- Many clinics, retail clinics (such as CVS or Walgreens), and urgent care centers perform COVID-19 testing.
 - Call ahead or visit their website to schedule a test.
617. **COVID-19 - What Types of Tests Are Available?**
- There are two types of tests available for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests.
 - **Test for Current Infection - Viral Test:** A viral test tells you if you have the COVID-19 infection right now. A viral test is done with either a nasal swab or a saliva sample. If you have **symptoms** of COVID-19 you should **test immediately**. If you were **exposed** to COVID-19 and have no symptoms, you should **test 5 to 7 days after exposure**.
 - **Test for Past Infection - Antibody Test:** An antibody test tells you if you have had COVID-19 before. Sometimes an antibody test may turn positive after a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19. This test is done with a blood sample. An antibody test may not be able to show if you have a current infection, because it can take 1 to 3 weeks for your body to make antibodies to the infection. If an antibody test is needed, it is usually performed 2 to 3 weeks after the start of the infection.
 - Some test results come back right away or within hours. Some tests may take longer (1 to 3 days) depending on the type of test.
1047. **COVID-19 - How to Protect Your Family and Yourself From Getting Sick:**
- **Get the COVID-19 vaccine.** It is your best protection against this serious infection.
 - Avoid close contact with people known to have COVID-19.
 - Try to stay at least 6 feet (2 meters) away from anyone who is coughing.
 - Wash hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
 - Avoid touching the eyes, nose or mouth. Germs on the hands can spread this way.
 - Do not share eating utensils (e.g., spoon, fork).

1048. **COVID-19 - Face Masks for Prevention:**

- Face masks are important for reducing the spread of COVID-19. They also reduce the spread of influenza (flu). People with COVID-19 can have no symptoms, but still spread the virus.
- Because of the Omicron variant (and other possible future variants) recommendations for wearing masks are pretty much the same for people who are vaccinated or unvaccinated. Mask wearing is even more important if you have a weak immune system.
- **People Who Are Well (Not Sick With COVID-19) Should Wear Masks If:**
 - ... Masks are recommended by your local health department.
 - ... You are in an indoor public space or crowded outdoor event in an area of high community spread.
 - ... You want extra protection (e.g., people at risk for severe disease). Those at risk for severe disease should talk to their doctor (or NP, PA) about how to stay safe.
 - ... You want extra protection while traveling on a plane, bus, train, or other form of public transportation or in transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
 - ... You must be around someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.
- **People Who Are Sick With COVID-19 Should Wear Masks If:**
 - ... You are around other people or animals (such as pets).
- **Exceptions:**
 - ... Face mask or covering is optional if outdoors and you can avoid being within 6 feet (2 meters) of other people. Some examples are an outdoor walk or run.
 - ... Face coverings also are not recommended for children under 2 years.
- **How to Select and Use a Face Mask:** Make sure your mask fits well (without gaps) and fully covers your nose and mouth. More information on how to select and use a mask is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>.

1050. **Keep Your Body Strong:**

- Keep your body strong, healthy, and ready to fight the COVID-19 virus.
- Get enough sleep.
- Stay physically active. Walk or exercise every day. Take the stairs.
- Stay well hydrated.
- Eat healthy meals. Avoid overeating to deal with your fears.
- Avoid the over-use of anti-fever medicines. Fever helps fight infections and ramps up your immune system.

1071. **Repeating a COVID-19 Viral Test:**

- **Negative Viral Test:** A repeat test is sometimes needed after a negative viral test. A test can sometimes have a false negative result.
- ... If you **have symptoms**, you should repeat a negative at home test 2 days (48 hours) later (total of 2 tests).
- ... If you **were exposed and have no symptoms**, you should repeat the at home test 2 days later. If that second test is negative, repeat it again in another 2 days (total of 3 tests).
- ... *Notes:* The COVID-19 vaccine does NOT affect the results of the viral test. Some reasons for a false negative test result include: how the sample was collected, how long into the illness it was taken, type of test done, and test accuracy.
- **Positive Viral Test:** After a positive test, repeat tests are generally not recommended for 30 days (1 month). *Reason:* The test may stay positive for a few weeks. Further, getting infected again appears to be rare during the first 30 to 90 days afterwards. However, if you have new symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days of exposure to someone with COVID-19, you should self-isolate and call your doctor (or NP/PA).
- *Talk to your doctor (or NP/PA) if you have questions about your test results.*

1100. **COVID-19 - Some Other Facts:**

- **Incubation Period:** Average 5 days (range 2 to 14 days) after coming in contact with a person who has COVID-19 virus.
- **No Symptoms, but Infected (Asymptomatic):** Approximately 30% of infected patients may have no symptoms.
- **Mild Infections:** About 80% of those with symptoms have a mild illness, much like a normal flu or a bad cold. The symptoms usually last 2 weeks.
- **Severe Infections:** About 20% of those with symptoms develop trouble breathing from viral pneumonia. Many of these need to be admitted to the hospital. People with complications generally recover in 3 to 6 weeks. Severe infections are much less common in people who are vaccinated.
- **Death Rate:** The adult death rate is approximately 1% to 3%. The death rate is lower in children and younger adults. It is higher in older adults. The risk of death is much lower in people who are vaccinated.
- **Prevention - Vaccine:** Several vaccines have been approved and released for use in the United States and Canada. The COVID-19 vaccine and booster will reduce the chance of you getting COVID-19. If you get COVID-19, the COVID-19 vaccine will decrease the chance of you becoming severely sick or needing to be hospitalized.
- **Prevention - Medicine:** The malaria drug chloroquine was studied and found not to be helpful for this disease. It also had cardiac side effects. Evusheld (Tixagevimab and cilgavimab) is a medicine to prevent COVID-19. It may be recommended for those with moderately to severely weak immune systems or those with a history of severe allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine. For those that catch COVID-19, there are monoclonal antibody and antiviral medicines that may be recommended for outpatients at risk for severe disease. Remember, social distancing and wearing masks have been proven to help prevent COVID-19!

1101. **Understanding Viral Test Results:**

- Viral tests look for part of the virus (RNA or proteins) in the test sample. Since this test looks for actual parts of the virus, it can tell you if you are *currently infected* (active infection) and at risk of spreading the disease. A viral test is done using a nasal (nose) swab or saliva (spit).
- A **positive viral test** means that you have COVID-19 infection and *can spread the infection to others*.
- A **negative viral test** means that you probably do not have COVID-19, at the time the test was done. However, tests can sometimes have a false negative result. A repeat test is sometimes needed. Negative at home self-tests should be repeated.
- ... If you **have symptoms**, you should repeat a negative at home test 2 days (48 hours) later (total of 2 tests).
- ... If you **were exposed and have no symptoms**, you should repeat the at home test 2 days later. If that second test is negative, repeat it again in another 2 days (total of 3 tests).
- *Notes:* The COVID-19 vaccine does NOT affect the results of the viral test. Some reasons for a false negative test result include: how the sample was collected, how long into the illness it was taken, type of test done, and test accuracy.
- *Talk to your doctor (or NP/PA) if you have questions about your test results.*

1102. **Understanding Antibody Test Results:**

- Antibody tests (also called serology tests) are done on blood samples.
- COVID-19 antibody tests look for antibodies to the virus that causes COVID-19. Antibodies begin to form during an infection but can last as long as a lifetime. Therefore, an antibody test cannot tell the difference between an active infection and one you had sometime in the past.
- A **positive antibody test** means that you most likely *have been, or are now*, infected with COVID-19. Sometimes an antibody test may turn positive after a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19. However, an antibody test is NOT a reliable way to determine if the vaccine worked for you.
- A **negative antibody test** means that you likely *never had* COVID-19 OR you *have not yet* formed antibodies to COVID-19.

1103. **Understanding Viral and Antibody Testing Together:**

- In some cases, your doctor (or NP/PA) may want to perform both antibody testing and viral testing together. The best source of information on understanding the test results will come from your doctor. Here is some information on how the two results can be used together.
- **Both Tests Are Positive:** You most likely have an *active infection* and can spread COVID-19 to others.
- **Both Tests Are Negative:** You likely do NOT have COVID-19 and likely never had a COVID-19 infection.
- **Viral Test Is Positive and Antibody Test Is Negative:** You most likely have an *active infection* and can spread COVID-19 to others. You have not yet developed antibodies to your active COVID-19 infection.
- **Viral Test Is Negative and Antibody Test Is Positive:** You likely do NOT have an active COVID-19 infection. You most likely had COVID-19 sometime in the past (or received the COVID-19 vaccine).

1111. **COVID-19 - Who Needs Testing?**
- **Symptoms:** If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should **test immediately**.
 - **Exposure and No Symptoms:** If you were exposed to COVID-19 you should **test 5 to 7 days after exposure**. *Exception:* People that have had a positive viral test for COVID-19 in last 30 days.
 - **Visiting Someone at High Risk for Severe COVID-19:** If you are visiting someone who is at high risk (e.g., older, weak immune system) for having a severe COVID-19 infection, you should **test before** you see them. This is especially important if you are in a community or place with higher COVID-19 spread.
1233. **COVID-19 - Exposure Risk Factors:**
- The following **risk factors** increase the chance of getting sick with COVID-19 after an exposure.
 - **How Close?** The closer you are to someone with COVID-19, the greater the chance of catching it. Being within 6 feet (2 meters) of an infected person increases the risk. Being in a crowded place also increases the risk.
 - **How Long?** Longer exposure time increases a person's risk of getting COVID-19. An exposure of 15 minutes or more is more likely to result in spread.
 - **Where - Indoors or Outdoors?** Being outside reduces the risk because there is better air movement.
 - **Did the Infected Person Have Symptoms?** If the person was sick with such symptoms as cough, fever, or trouble breathing, it increases the exposed person's risk of getting COVID-19.
 - **Who Was Wearing Masks?** Wearing a well-fitting mask can decrease a person's risk of getting COVID-19. If both the infected and exposed person were wearing well-fitting masks, the risk of spread is low. If only one was masked, the risk is moderate. If neither was masked, the risk is higher.
1234. **COVID-19 - Symptoms:**
- COVID-19 most often causes a respiratory illness.
 - *The most common symptoms are:* cough, fever, and shortness of breath.
 - *Other less common symptoms are:* chills, fatigue, headache, loss of smell or taste, muscle pain, and sore throat.
 - Some people may have minimal symptoms or even have no symptoms (asymptomatic).
1235. **COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) - Pandemic:**
- COVID-19 became a global pandemic in early 2020.
 - In the Summer and Fall of 2021 the **Delta variant** was the most common COVID-19 variant. Starting in the winter of 2021 and into 2022, **Omicron** has become the most common variant.
 - The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC) is considered the source of truth for this guideline. This continues to be a changing situation and guidance from the CDC is updated frequently. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

1236. **Note to Triager - COVID-19 Testing:**
- **For questions about testing**, it is often best to **direct the patient to their doctor** (or NP/PA), during office hours. Their doctor is the best resource for up-to-date information on testing. *Testing in a lab requires a doctor's order (as with all medical tests).*
 - Many clinics, retail clinics (such as CVS, Walgreens), and urgent care centers perform testing.
 - Testing is also available at some local and state public health departments.
 - **Self-tests** (such as Abbot BinaxNow) for use at home are available in some drugstores or online (such as Amazon, CVS, or Walgreens).
 - *What about a standing order?* Call centers should talk with their medical leadership about triagers being able to use a standing order for testing.
1237. **COVID-19 - Where to Go for Testing?**
- Your doctor (or NP/PA) can order a COVID-19 test for you.
 - Many clinics, retail clinics (such as CVS, Walgreens), and urgent care centers perform testing.
 - Testing is also available at some local and state public health departments.
 - **Self-tests** (such as Abbot BinaxNOW) for use at home are available in some drugstores (such as CVS, Walgreens). You can also buy them on the internet (such as Amazon, CVS, Walgreens). In the U.S. free self-tests are available at [COVIDtests.GOV](https://www.covidtests.gov). Negative self-tests need to be repeated.
1291. **FAQ - Is Ivermectin Approved for COVID-19?**
- **No.** Ivermectin is not an approved drug for treating or preventing COVID-19.
 - Ivermectin is a drug used to treat parasites and lice.
 - Although some people are interested in ivermectin to treat COVID-19, it has NOT been shown to treat or prevent COVID-19.
 - Some people have gotten ivermectin on their own through the internet or animal care suppliers.
 - People have been hospitalized for toxic effects from taking ivermectin on their own (sometimes taking large overdoses).
 - *Do not get or take ivermectin without a prescription from your doctor.* NEVER take medicines made for animals.
1296. **COVID-19 - How It Is Spread:**
- *COVID-19 is spread from person to person.*
 - **Respiratory Droplets:** The virus spreads from respiratory droplets that are produced when a person coughs, sneezes, shouts, or sings. The infected droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person or land on the surface of their face or eyes. Droplets fall quickly to the floor or ground. This is **how most COVID is spread**.
 - **Surfaces:** Most infected people also have respiratory secretions on their hands. These secretions get transferred to healthy people on doorknobs, faucet handles, etc. The virus then gets transferred to healthy people when they touch their face or rub their eyes. This is a **less common cause** of spread.
 - **Aerosols:** Aerosols are tiny, invisible particles that can float in the air for 1 to 2 hours and travel more than 6 feet (2 meters). They occur in a closed room with poor ventilation. Aerosols are a **rare cause** of COVID-19 spread.

1371. **FAQ - What Masks Are Best to Protect Against COVID-19?**

- There are many types of face masks. Some provide more protection against COVID-19 than others.
- However, it is important to remember **any face mask is better than no face mask**. Also, any mask you use should fit well (snuggly against the face with no gaps) and should be clean and dry.
- ... **Cloth masks** made with several layers of finely woven fabric provide good protection. A single fabric layer is not enough.
- ... Disposable **surgical masks** (procedure masks) provide better protection than cloth masks.
- ... Respirator masks such as the **KN95** and NIOSH-approved **N95 masks** provide the best protection. These are most often used by healthcare workers.
- The CDC recommends that "you wear the most protective mask you can that fits well and that you will wear consistently."
- You can find more information on the CDC website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/types-of-masks.html>.

FIRST AID

N/A



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Key Points

- An outbreak of this infection began in China in December 2019.
- The first patient in the United States occurred on January 21, 2020.
- Four patients were confirmed in Canada on January 31, 2020.
- The *World Health Organization* (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global public health emergency on January 30, 2020 and then a pandemic on March 11, 2020.
- COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people age 6 months and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future. Everyone 5 years and older should get a COVID-19 booster shot (vaccination).
- The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* (CDC) is considered the source of truth for this guideline. This continues to be a rapidly changing situation and guidance from the CDC is being updated frequently. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Symptoms

The COVID-19 coronavirus most often causes a lower respiratory tract illness. More common symptoms are:

- Anorexia (40-84%)
- Chills (16-28%)
- **Cough** (59-82%)
- Fatigue (44-70%)
- **Fever** (83-99%)
- Loss of smell or taste (40-50%)
- Muscle pain (11-35%)
- **Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing** (31-40%)

Other symptoms may include:

- Diarrhea (2-5%)
- Headache (5-14%)
- Nausea or Vomiting (1-10%)
- Runny or Stuffy Nose (4%)
- Sore Throat (5%)
- Sputum production (14-34%)

Having two or more of any of these symptoms increases the likelihood that a person may have COVID-19.

Over 30% of infected adult patients have no symptoms (asymptomatic). Children and teens are even more likely to have no symptoms.

Symptoms can be different for the different COVID-19 variants. The symptoms of the Omicron variant seem to be milder for most people (especially if vaccinated) and similar to the common cold.

Cause

It is caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19).

Viruses change through mutation. New variants of the COVID-19 virus are expected to appear and spread.

In the Summer and Fall of 2021 the **Delta variant** was the most common COVID-19 variant. Starting in the winter of 2021 and into 2022, **Omicron** has become the most common variant.

The COVID-19 vaccines help protect against the delta and omicron variants.

- Infection with COVID-19 occurs less often in people who are vaccinated.
- When it happens, it is called a "breakthrough" infection.
- The risk of serious illness and hospitalization is much lower than if a person was not vaccinated.
- Current evidence suggests that vaccinated people who become infected with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others.

How It Is Spread (Transmission)

COVID-19 is spread from person to person.

- **Respiratory Droplets:** The virus spreads from respiratory droplets that are produced when a person coughs, sneezes, shouts, or sings. The infected droplets can then be inhaled by a nearby person or land on the surface of their face or eyes. Droplets fall quickly to the floor or ground. This is **how most COVID is spread**.
- **Surfaces:** Most infected people also have respiratory secretions on their hands. These secretions get transferred to healthy people on doorknobs, faucet handles, etc. The virus then gets transferred to healthy people when they touch their face or rub their eyes. This is a **less common cause** of spread.
- **Aerosols:** Aerosols are tiny, invisible particles that can float in the air for 1 to 2 hours and travel more than 6 feet (2 meters). They occur in a closed room with poor ventilation. Aerosols are a **rare cause** of COVID-19 spread.

The following **risk factors** increase the chance of getting sick with COVID-19 after an exposure:

- **How Close?** The closer a person is to someone with COVID-19, the greater the chance of catching it. Being within 6 feet (2 meters) of an infected person increases the risk. Being in a crowded place also increases the risk.
- **How Long?** Longer exposure time increases a person's risk of getting COVID-19. An exposure of 15 minutes or more is more likely to result in spread.
- **Where - Indoors or Outdoors?** Being outside reduces the risk because there is better air movement.
- **Did the Infected Person Have Symptoms?** If the person was sick with such symptoms as cough, fever, or trouble breathing, it increases the exposed person's risk of getting COVID-19.
- **Who Was Wearing Masks?** Wearing a well-fitting mask can decrease a person's risk of getting COVID-19. If both the infected and exposed person were wearing well-fitting masks, the risk of spread is low. If only one was masked, the risk is moderate. If neither was masked, the risk is higher.

Incubation Period

The incubation period averages 5 days (range 2 to 14 days) after coming in contact with the secretions of a person who has COVID-19.

Complications

Complications include pneumonia, hypoxia, ARDS, respiratory failure, and death.

People with the following medical problems or conditions are at **HIGH RISK** of complications.

- **Age:** The risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, with older adults at highest risk.
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic lung disease (e.g., COPD, cystic fibrosis, moderate-severe asthma, pulmonary hypertension)
- Dementia and other neurologic conditions
- Diabetes
- Down syndrome
- Heart disease (e.g., coronary artery disease, heart failure)
- HIV infection
- Liver disease (especially cirrhosis)
- Mental health disorders (e.g., depression, schizophrenia)
- Obesity (BMI of 30 or higher)
- Pregnancy
- Sickle cell disease
- Smoking
- Solid organ transplant
- Stroke or cerebrovascular disease
- Substance use disorder (e.g., alcohol, opioids)
- Weak immune system

For complete list of high risk conditions see CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>.

The adult death rate for COVID-19 is approximately 1% to 3%. The death rate is lower in children and younger adults. It is higher in older adults. It is much lower in vaccinated people.

People with O negative blood type may have a slightly lower risk of COVID-19 infection and severe

COVID-19 illness. More research on this is needed. People with O negative blood type should still continue to wear a mask, social distance, and get vaccinated!

Diagnosis and Testing

There are two types of tests for COVID-19: viral tests and antibody tests.

- **Test for Current Infection - Viral Test:** A viral test tells us if a person has the COVID-19 infection right now. A viral test is done with either a nasal swab or a saliva sample.
- **Test for Past Infection - Antibody Test:** An antibody test tells us if a person had COVID-19 before. This test is done with a blood sample. An antibody test may not be able to show a current infection, because it can take 1 to 3 weeks for the body to make antibodies to the infection. Sometimes an antibody test may turn positive after a person has been vaccinated against COVID-19. However, an antibody test is NOT a reliable way to determine if the vaccine worked.

Rapid home viral tests (self-tests such as BinaxNOW) provide results in minutes. Results from tests performed in a lab usually take several hours to a couple days.

Who should get tested? When should testing be performed?

- **Symptoms:** People who have symptoms of COVID-19 should get **tested immediately**.
- **Exposure and No Symptoms:** People who were exposed to COVID-19 should **test 5 to 7 days after exposure**. *Exception:* People that have had a positive test for COVID-19 in last 30 days. The test may stay positive for a few weeks after having COVID-19.
- **Visiting Someone at High Risk for Severe COVID-19:** If you are visiting someone who is at high risk (e.g., older, weak immune system) for having a severe COVID-19 infection, you should **test before** you see them. This is especially important if you are in a community or place with higher COVID-19 spread.

What does a positive or negative test mean?

- A **positive viral test** means that a person has COVID-19 infection and *can spread the infection to others*.
- A **negative viral test** means that the person probably does NOT have COVID-19, at the time the test was done. However, tests can sometimes have a false negative result. A repeat test is sometimes needed. Negative at home self-tests should be repeated per the FDA.
- ... For those with symptoms, repeat a negative at home test 2 days (48 hours) later (total of 2 tests).
- ... For those exposed but who have no symptoms, repeat the at home test 2 days later. If that second test is negative, repeat it again in another 2 days (total of 3 tests).
- *Notes:* The COVID-19 vaccine does NOT affect the results of the viral test. Some reasons for a false negative test result include: how the sample was collected, how long into the illness it was taken, the type of test done, and test accuracy.

For questions about testing, it is often best to direct the patient to their doctor (or NP/PA) during office hours. Their doctor is the best resource for up-to-date information on testing.

Pulse Oximetry

A pulse oximeter measures the amount of oxygen in the blood. It also measures the pulse rate. A pulse oximeter consists of two parts.

- There is a monitor containing the batteries and display, and
- The probe that senses the pulse and oxygen level. The probe can be placed on the finger, toe, or the ear.

Here are some important tips on correctly using a pulse oximeter.

- Use the index or middle finger. Try not to use the toes or ear lobes.
- Remove nail polish from the finger on which pulse oximetry is being performed.
- Warm the hand prior to measurement.
- Perform the pulse oximetry indoors. Avoid bright light.
- Perform the pulse oximetry while at rest, and during quiet breathing.
- Observe readings for 30 to 60 seconds. Identify the most common value. Only use readings that have a strong and regular pulse signal.
- Measure and record values two to three times per day.

Here is how to interpret oxygen level values.

- **95 - 100%:** Normal oxygen level.
- **91 - 94%:** Mildly low oxygen level for most people. It may be normal for some patients with COPD.
- **86 - 90%:** Moderately low oxygen level. Moderate hypoxia. Oxygen needed.
- **85% or lower:** Severely low oxygen level. Severe hypoxia. Oxygen needed.

The **Oxygen Monitoring and Hypoxia** guideline has more comprehensive information and triage decision support.

Treatment

For healthy people with **mild symptoms**, prescription medicines are usually not needed. People can treat the symptoms at home using over-the-counter medicines for fever, pain, and cough.

People with **mild to moderate symptoms and who are at high risk** for severe COVID-19 may sometimes need special prescription medicines as outpatients. There are monoclonal antibodies (e.g., bamlanivimab, casirivimab-imdevimab, sotrovimab) and antiviral medicines (e.g., nirmatrelvir-ritonavir / Paxlovid, molnupiravir).

People with **severe COVID-19** will need emergency department treatment and hospitalization. Treatment of hospitalized patients may include oxygen, steroids, antiviral medicine (e.g., remdesivir), and immune system medicines (e.g., baricitinib, tocilizumab).

This is a complex and changing area of information. Patients should talk with their doctor (or NP/PA) if they have questions.

Prevention

Social distancing and wearing well-fitting **masks** have been proven to help prevent COVID-19.

Prevention - Vaccines

COVID-19 **vaccines** are safe and effective. They reduce the chance of getting COVID-19. If a vaccinated person becomes infected, the chance of severe illness and hospitalization are less. COVID-19 vaccination is recommended for all people age 6 months and older, including people who are pregnant, breastfeeding, trying to get pregnant now, or might become pregnant in the future.

Several COVID-19 vaccines have been approved for use in Canada and the United States:

- **AstraZeneca (Oxford):** Approved for use in Canada in February 2021. More information available at: <https://www.astrazeneca.com/covid-19.html>.

- *Johnson & Johnson (Janssen)*: Approved for use in the US in February 2021. Single shot for the primary series. More information available at: <https://www.jnj.com/coronavirus>.
- *Medicago (Covifenz)*: Approved for use in Canada in February 2022.
- *Moderna*: Approved for use in Canada and US, December 2020. Approved in the US. More information available at: <https://www.modernatx.com/cove-study>.
- *Novavax (Nuvaxovid)*: Approved for use in the US in July 2022. Approved in Canada.
- *Pfizer (BioNTech)*: Approved for use in Canada and US, December 2020. More information available at: <https://www.cvdvaccine.com/>.

Everyone 5 years and older should get one or more **booster vaccine shots**. Booster shots are especially important for groups at higher risk. Recommendations for the timing and total number of booster shots depend on what type of COVID-19 vaccine a person initially got, a person's age, and whether a person is healthy or has a weak immune system. Either the **Pfizer** or the **Moderna** mRNA vaccines can be used as a booster.

Up-to-date on vaccination means that a person has received all doses in the primary series and got all recommended booster shots. For people with moderately to severely weak immune systems up-to-date means they received all recommended primary shots and boosters. Depending on the person's age and the vaccine given, this group may require an extra primary shot (e.g., third shot) and booster.

For U.S. information and the most up-to-date criteria, see the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>. In Canada see <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/vaccines.html>.

Prevention - Monoclonal Antibodies

Evusheld (tixagevimab and cilgavimab) are **monoclonal antibodies** used to prevent COVID-19 in those with moderate to severely weak immune systems. It is used before a person is exposed to COVID-19 (pre-exposure prophylaxis). Evusheld may also be recommended in those that cannot get the vaccine because of a severe allergy.

What to Do After Exposure to COVID-19?

- Start wearing a mask immediately and continue wearing the mask for 10 days (day 0 is the last day of the exposure).
- The person should not go places that they cannot wear a well-fitted mask.
- Watch for any symptoms of a COVID-19 infection.
- If symptoms occur or the person tests positive, they should isolate at home immediately.
- The person should get tested at least 5 full days from the exposure. Negative at home antigen tests need to be repeated 2 days later. If that second test is negative, it should be repeated again in another 2 days (total of 3 tests).

Note: Those that had a previous positive test for COVID-19 within the last 30 days do not need to test unless they develop symptoms.

How to Protect Others When a Person has COVID-19?

If a person has **no symptoms**, but tested positive:

- Home isolation can end after 5 full days. Day 0 is the day the test was performed.
- Continue to wear a well-fitted mask for a full 10 days when around others.
- If symptoms of COVID-19 occur, start isolation again with day 0 being the day that symptoms began.

If a person **has symptoms** (feels sick):

- Isolation time at home depends on how severe the COVID-19 symptoms are and if the person has a weak immune system.
- Day 0 is the day symptoms began.
- **Mild COVID-19:** Home isolation can end 5 days after symptoms started if (1) fever has been gone for 24 hours (without using fever medicine) AND (2) symptoms are better. Continue to wear a well-fitted mask for a full 10 days when around others.
- **Moderate COVID-19 (e.g., breathing difficulty):** Home isolation is needed for at least 10 days.
- **Severe COVID-19 (e.g., hospitalized for COVID-19) or if the person has a moderate to severely weak immune system:** Home isolation is needed for at least 10 days. Isolation may be needed for 20 days or longer. The patient should talk to their doctor before ending home isolation.

Can Animals Get COVID-19?

The main way COVID-19 spreads is from person to person. There is low risk of getting COVID-19 from a pet or other animal.

- It is possible for animals to catch COVID-19 from people. A few pets have tested positive for COVID-19 (including cats and dogs).
- The CDC recommends treating pets like other family members when trying to avoid spreading COVID-19. Do not let pets have close contact with other people or animals outside your household. A sick person should self-isolate and avoid contact with both people and pets.
- Call your vet if your pet gets sick or you have other questions.
- The CDC has more information on COVID-19 and animals at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/animals/pets-other-animals.html>.

Are There Other Types of Coronaviruses That Can Cause Illness in Humans?

Common coronaviruses can cause colds and upper respiratory symptoms. These can be identified in currently available commercial respiratory testing panels (human coronaviruses HKU1, OC43, 229E, and OC43). These coronaviruses are completely different than the novel coronavirus addressed in this guideline.

Two other coronaviruses that previously have caused serious outbreaks are:

- *MERS-CoV*: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)
- *SARS-CoV*: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Internet Resources

- *Canada.CA*: COVID-19. Available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>.
- *COVIDtests.GOV*: Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 4 free at-home COVID-19 tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. <https://www.covidtests.gov/>.
- *National Institutes of Health (NIH)*: Treatment Guidelines. <https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/>.
- *Public Health Agency of Canada*: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>.
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SEARCH WORDS

2019-NCOV
 BREATHING
 BREATHING DIFFICULTY
 CORONAVIRUS
 CORONAVIRUS EXPOSURE

COUGH
COVID19
COVID-19
COVID-19 EXPOSURE
DIFFICULT BREATHING
DIFFICULTY BREATHING
EXPOSURE
EXPOSURE QUESTION
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