

# COVID-19:

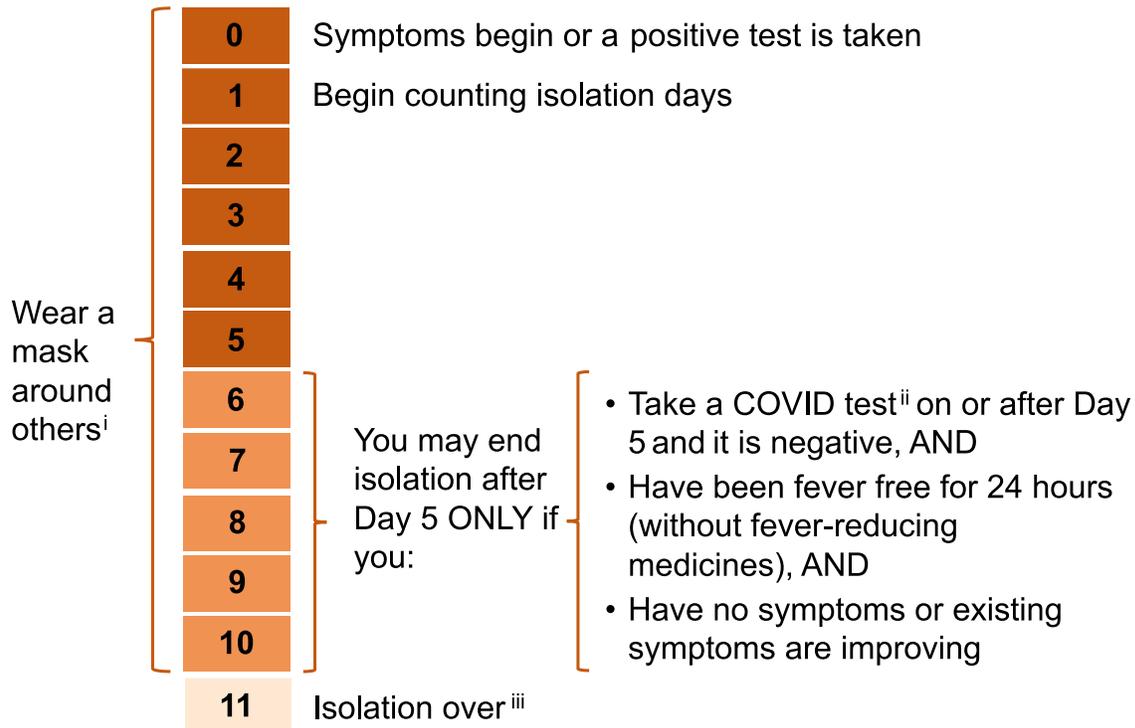
# Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19

This document is updated often. Visit the English webpage at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation) for the most up to date information. To view the information in another language, click on "Translate" in the top left corner of the page and select desired language.

## Summary

### ISOLATION

#### DAYS



- i. When in isolation, you must wear a highly protective mask around others even in your own home. If you end isolation after Day 5, it is *strongly recommended* that you wear a mask through Day 10.
- ii. Antigen test preferred.
- iii. If you still have a fever or your other COVID-19 symptoms are not improving, stay in isolation & talk with your doctor. If you are immunocompromised or had severe COVID-19, you may need to isolate for longer. Talk with doctor about when you can be around others.

For more information, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidisolation).

### Treatment for people at high risk for getting very sick

If you are at [high risk](#), you may be able to get treatment to help keep you out of the hospital. Contact a doctor right away if you test positive and have symptoms, even if they are mild. Don't delay: the medicines work best when they are given as soon as possible after symptoms start. See [ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines) for more information.

### Introduction

In Los Angeles County, if you have COVID-19\* you are required to:

- 1 **Isolate yourself**, and
- 2 [Wear a highly protective mask](#), and
- 3 **Tell your [close contacts](#) that they have been exposed** and need to follow [instructions for close contacts](#)

\*You are considered to have COVID-19, if you have a positive viral test for COVID-19 and/or a healthcare provider thinks that you have COVID-19.

Call the COVID Info line 833-540-0473 (open daily 8:00am–8:30pm) if you test positive for COVID-19 and have questions or need help. Call this number if you are experiencing homelessness and/or are unable to safely isolate or quarantine at home.

Help slow the spread of COVID-19 in LA County. If you get a call from “**LA PublicHealth**” or **1-833-641-0305** please answer the phone. If you get a text message from ‘Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’ with a link for an online interview, please complete it. (See [Contact Tracing](#).)

### ISOLATE: Stay home and away from others

If you have COVID-19, you must self-isolate regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

#### How long do I need to isolate?

You must isolate for at least 5 days. How long you have to isolate depends on whether you have [symptoms](#) and if you get a negative follow-up viral test on Day 5 or later. If you test on Day 5 or later, it is better to use an antigen test because NAAT/PCR tests are more likely to stay positive after you are no longer infectious.

#### Ending isolation: if you have symptoms and test positive for COVID-19 or if your doctor thinks\* that you have COVID-19

Isolation can end after Day 5 ONLY if all of the following criteria are met:

- You have a negative COVID-19 test\*\* that was collected on Day 5 or later, **and**
- You have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine, **and**
- Your symptoms are improving.

-OR-

Isolation can end after Day 10 if both of these criteria are met:

- You have not had a fever for at least 24 hours, **and**
- Your symptoms are improving.

<sup>1</sup> Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. *This list does not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms. Visit [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare) to learn more about what to do if you are sick.* Call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are having serious symptoms. Serious symptoms include difficulty breathing, pain or pressure in your chest, have bluish lips or face or being confused or having difficulty waking up.

For most people, if both of the above criteria are met, isolation can end after Day 10\* even if follow-up COVID-19 viral tests are positive. This is because many people continue to test positive even though they are not likely to still be infectious.

However, if you have a [condition](#) that weakens your immune system or if you were severely ill with COVID-19 you might need to stay home for longer than 10 days. Talk to your doctor about when you can be around other people.

Day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed.

\*If your doctor initially thought your symptoms were due to COVID-19 (and you did not test positive for COVID-19), but they reassessed your diagnosis and decided that you are not infected, you can stop isolating after 24 hours of being fever-free. But if you are a close contact to a person with COVID-19 you must follow the on the [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#) webpage.

\*\*The test must be an [FDA-authorized](#) COVID-19 viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. [An antigen test is preferred](#). Self-tests are acceptable, but if it is used for return to work the test must be observed or reported in a certain way. For more information check with your employer and see [Cal-OSHA Testing FAQs](#).

*Note: Employers may require their employees/contractors to complete the full 10 days of isolation before returning to in-person work. Employees should discuss return to work with their employer. See [Return to Work \(Non-Healthcare\) Summary Table](#).*

### Ending isolation: if you test positive for COVID-19 and you never develop symptoms

Isolation can end after Day 5 if:

- You have a negative COVID-19 test\* collected on Day 5 or later, **and**
- You never got symptoms of COVID-19.

-OR-

Isolation can end after Day 10 if:

- You never got symptoms of COVID-19.

For most people, isolation can end after Day 10, even if follow-up COVID-19 viral tests are positive. This is because many people continue to test positive even though they are not likely to still be infectious.

However, if you have a [condition](#) that severely weakens your immune system you might need to stay home for longer than 10 days. Talk to your doctor for more information.

Day 0 is the day your positive test was taken. Day 1 is the first full day after your positive test was taken.

*Important: if you develop symptoms, you must follow the ending isolation instructions for persons with symptoms. Your new Day 0 is the day your symptoms began. See above.*

\*The test must be an [FDA-authorized](#) COVID-19 viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. [An antigen test is preferred](#). Self-tests are acceptable, but if it is used for return to work the test must be observed or reported in a certain way. For more information check with your employer and see [Cal-OSHA Testing FAQs](#).

*Note: Employers may require their employees/contractors to complete the full 10 days of isolation before returning to in-person work. Employees should discuss return to work with their employer. See [Return to Work \(Non-Healthcare\) Summary Table](#).*

## Isolation Instructions – How to protect others

- **Stay home except to get medical care.**
  - Do not go to work, school, or public places.
  - If you must leave home to get needed medical care or COVID-19 testing, wear a [highly protective mask](#). Drive yourself, if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, sit in the back seat, leave the windows down, and wear your mask.
  - If someone from outside your household is shopping for you, ask them to leave the food and other supplies at your door, if possible. Pick them up after the person has left. If you need help finding free delivery services, social services, essential items like food and medicines call 2-1-1 or visit the Public Health resource webpage [ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm](https://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm).
- **Separate yourself from others in your home**
  - Wear a mask if you must be around others. See [Wear a highly protective mask](#) for more details.
  - If you need to be in the same room as other people, set it up so that you can stay 6 feet apart if possible. It is important to stay away from people who are at [higher risk of serious illness](#).
  - Use a separate bathroom. If this is not possible, disinfect the bathroom after use (see cleaning information [below](#)).
  - Open windows or use a fan or an air conditioner in shared spaces in the home.
  - Do not allow non-essential visitors.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Throw used tissues in a lined trash can after each use. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after you cough or sneeze.
- **Avoid sharing food or personal household items**
  - Do not prepare or serve food to others, if possible.
  - Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.
  - Make sure to wash your dishes, drinking glasses, and eating utensils with soap and water after each use.
- **Clean your hands often**
  - Wash your hands often, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; before eating or preparing food; and after touching your face mask or cover. Use soap and water for *at least* 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub hands together for 30 seconds until they feel dry. Use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- **Clean and disinfect all “high-touch” surfaces every day**
  - Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces e.g., counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
  - Clean and disinfect any surfaces that may have body fluids on them.
  - Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes. Be sure to follow the product label instructions.

## Wear a highly protective mask

While you are in isolation, you **must** wear a highly protective mask if you need to be around others, including people you live with.

If you meet the criteria to leave isolation after Day 5, it is **strongly recommended** that you continue to wear a highly protective mask around others, especially through Day 10. Note: if you return to work after Day 5, you are required to wear a mask at the workplace for a total of 10 days after your positive test. See [Return to Work \(Non-Healthcare\) Summary Table](#).

A [highly protective mask](#) is one that fits and filters well such as a well-fitting respirator (such as an N95 or KN95), a double mask (a cloth mask over a medical mask), a well-fitting medical mask, or well-fitting, high-filtration cloth ("reusable") mask with a nose-wire. Well-fitting respirators provide the most protection. See [ph.lacounty.gov/masks](http://ph.lacounty.gov/masks) for more details about masks that offer the best protection.

## Tell your close contacts they have been exposed

You must tell your close contacts that they could be infected. They must take steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 including masking, testing, and monitoring their health. Give them the [Instructions for Close Contacts](#). They are available in multiple languages at [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcontacts](http://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcontacts). Your close contacts must follow the instructions even if they feel well or are fully vaccinated.

If you work or study in a setting where you could have gotten COVID-19 or passed it on to others, please tell your workplace or school so that they can advise others to take any necessary precautions.

### Definition of a Close Contact

A "close contact" is any **person who shared the same indoor airspace with you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24 hour period while you 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.

You are considered to be infectious (meaning you can spread COVID-19 to others) starting 2 days before your symptoms began until your isolation ends. If you test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms, you are considered to be infectious from 2 days before your test was taken until your isolation ends.

## Take care of your health

### Home Care

Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home. Here are steps that you can take to help you get better:

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids
- Take over-the-counter medicine such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain. Note that children younger than age 2 should not be given any over-the-counter cold medications without first speaking with a doctor.

### Seeking Medical Care

Stay in touch with your doctor and seek medical care if your symptoms get worse.

Medicines are now available to treat people with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who are at high risk of getting very sick. **If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and are age 65 years or older and/or have an [underlying medical condition](#), call your doctor right away, even if your symptoms are mild.** Don't delay: the medicines work best when they are given as soon as possible after symptoms start. For more information, talk to your doctor and see the [medication webpage](#).

### Call 911 if there are emergency warning signs



People with emergency warning signs should call 911. If it's not urgent, call your doctor before visiting. You may be able to get advice by phone.

### Dealing with Stress

COVID-19 and self-isolation are stressful for people. Visit the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health's [COVID-19 webpage](#) and the 211LA webpage ([211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health](https://211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health)) for local resources to address mental health & wellbeing needs and concerns. In addition, guidance and resources, including information on crisis hotlines, are also 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 to help with life's everyday stressors. After a short assessment, you are connected to customized support to meet your needs. Options include:

- on-demand chat with trained Peer Coaches,
- self-paced lessons on a variety of topics to improve wellbeing, and
- community support groups

iPrevail is offered in English and Spanish and is available 24/7 from any smart device.

If you need to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health Access Center 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-854-7771. If you need help finding healthcare, call the Los Angeles County Information line at 2-1-1. This number is available 24/7.

### Contact tracing

Contact tracing is a simple, confidential process that is being used to help slow the spread of COVID-19. You can do your part by answering a few simple questions about the places you have been and the people you have been around while you were infectious.

- If you get a call or text message from Public Health, it is important that you respond to us as soon as possible. It may show on your phone as "LA PublicHealth" or 1-(833) 641-0305. The text message will be from Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.
  - If you get a call from Public Health, please answer to complete an interview.

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- If you get a text, please click the link to do an online interview or call the number to talk to a specialist.
- Conversations with public health staff are confidential. This means any information you share will be kept private.
- The people you tell Public Health about will be contacted but will not be told your name, contact information, or that you have COVID-19. They will not be told anything about you, just that they were exposed to COVID-19.
- Public Health staff will answer any questions you may have and will also share helpful resources such as how to get a COVID-19 test, the best time to get a COVID-19 vaccine, or help finding a doctor.
- To learn more about contact tracing, click [here](#).

### More information

- For more information on COVID-19 and to view the resources mentioned above in multiple languages, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/](https://ph.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/).
- For help finding free delivery services, social services, essential items like food and medicines, visit [ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm](https://ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/resources.htm) or call 2-1-1 (which is available 24/7).
- Please call your health care provider for any questions related to your health. If you need help finding a health care provider, call 2-1-1.
- Information about Disability Insurance, Unemployment & Paid Family Leave for people who are unable to work because they, or a family member, need to isolate or quarantine is available on the [California Employment Development Department](#) website.
- For more information on COVID-19 related work issues, view the [COVID-19 Safety Workers Rights in California Pamphlet](#).