

COVID-19:

Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19

This document is updated often. Visit the English webpage at 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

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

- 1 **Isolate yourself**, and
- 2 **Wear a mask indoors and outdoors for 10 days**, and
- 3 **Tell your [close contacts](#) that they have been exposed** and need to follow [instructions for close contacts](#) (if you have a positive viral test), and

*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.

Please help slow the spread of COVID-19 by answering if you get a call from "LA PublicHealth" or **1-833-641-0305** (see [Contact Tracing](#)). If you received a Los Angeles County Health Officer Order and have not yet had a contact tracing interview, you must call the number on the Order within 24 hours.

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.¹

How long do I need to isolate?

Everyone with COVID-19 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 can stay positive even 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 conditions are met:

- You have a negative COVID-19 test** that was collected on day 5 or later **and**

¹ 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 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.

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- 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 conditions are met:

- You have not had a fever for at least 24 hours **and**
- Your symptoms are improving
 - 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 instructions in the "If you develop symptoms" section of the [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#) webpage.

**The test must be a COVID-19 viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. An antigen test is preferred.

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.

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.

*The test must be a COVID-19 viral test such as an antigen or NAAT/PCR test. An antigen test is preferred.

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.

Isolation Instructions

- **Stay home except to get medical care.**
 - Do not go to work, school, or public places.
 - If you must leave home to get essential medical care, drive yourself, if possible. If you cannot drive yourself, sit in the back seat, leave the windows down, and wear a 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.
- **Separate yourself from others in your home**
 - 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](#).
 - Wear a mask over your nose and mouth if you must be around others. See [Wear a mask indoors and outdoors for 10 days](#) for more details.
 - 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.
 - Do not handle pets or other animals.

Anyone who continues to be in close contact with you will need to stay in quarantine for longer (see [Quarantine and Other Instructions for close contacts](#)).
- **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.

- If caregivers and household contacts clean or come into contact with your body fluids or secretions (such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine, or diarrhea) they should wear a disposable facemask and gloves. After cleaning, they should remove and dispose of their gloves first, clean their hands, then remove and dispose of their facemask, and clean their hands again.

Wear a mask indoors and outdoors for 10 days

You must wear a well-fitting mask over your nose and mouth when you are around others, indoors and outdoors, for a total of 10 days. This includes around household members. See ph.lacounty.gov/masks for more information.

- Adults should wear a well-fitting medical grade mask (surgical or respirator).
- Children should wear a well-fitting, non-cloth mask of multiple layers of non-woven material with a nose wire.

Tell your close contacts they have been exposed

If you have a positive viral test result for COVID-19 you must tell your close contacts that they could be infected. They are required to quarantine unless they are exempt. Give them the [Quarantine and Other Instructions for Close Contacts](#). They are available in multiple languages at ph.lacounty.gov/covidquarantine.

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 test and/or quarantine as needed.

Definition of a Close Contact

A "close contact" is any of the following people who were exposed to you while you were infectious*:

- a. Any person who was within 6 feet of you for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period
- b. Any person who had unprotected contact with your body fluids and/or secretions. For example, you coughed or sneezed on them, you shared utensils, a cup, or saliva with them, or they cared for you without wearing appropriate protective equipment.

*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

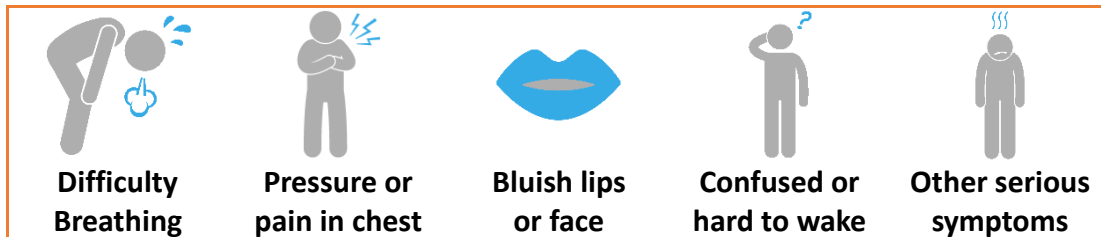
Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and can recover at home. Here are steps that you can take to help you get better:

- 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. If you are age 65 years or older or have an [underlying medical condition](#) it is especially important to call your doctor as you may be at a higher risk of serious illness. Medicines are now available to treat people with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who are [at risk for progression to severe COVID-19](#). 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) 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, 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.

Talk to Public Health - contact tracing

Contact tracing is a simple, confidential process that is being used to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

- If you received a Los Angeles County Health Officer Isolation Order and have not already completed a contact tracing interview, you must call the number on the Order within 24 hours. If you get a call or message from "LA PublicHealth" or 1-833-641-0305, please do your part by taking the call and answering some questions about the places you have been and the people you have been around while you were infectious.
- The people you tell the specialist about will be contacted and asked to stay home to help prevent others from getting sick. They will not be told your name or contact information. The specialist will also answer any questions you may have and share information about services.
- 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/.
- For help finding free delivery services, social services, essential items like food and medicines, visit 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](https://www.edd.ca.gov/) website.
- For more information on COVID-19 related work issues, view the [COVID-19 Safety Workers Rights in California Pamphlet](#).