

# Frequently Asked Covid-19 Questions

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Other symptoms are possible as well as this is a new virus we are still learning about.

## What is quarantine?

Quarantine is used to separate people who are **close contacts** of someone with a contagious disease, like COVID-19, from others for a period of time to see if they become sick. This is a method to prevent the spread of disease. When someone is quarantining, they should stay home and avoid contact with other people until the quarantine period is over. This includes people in their household as much as it is possible.

For COVID-19, the quarantine period is 14 days from the time of last exposure to the person with COVID-19. For those who live in the same house as someone who has COVID-19, they should continue to quarantine until 14 days after the date the person with COVID-19 is told they no longer need to practice isolation.

## What is isolation?

Similar to quarantine, isolation is recommended for those who are **sick** with symptoms of COVID-19 and have tested positive or are waiting on the results of a test. As with quarantine, they must remain at home or the place they were told to isolate and avoid contact with other people until their isolation period is over. This includes those in their household as much as possible.

Generally, the isolation period for COVID-19 continues until each of these conditions is met:

- Your symptoms (such as cough and shortness of breath) are better - AND –
- At least 10 days have passed since your illness onset – AND –
- You have had no fever for at least 24 hours and have not used fever-reducing medication during that time.

## **What does it mean to be a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and what should a close contact do?**

Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of someone who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes or more. If you are a close contact to a person with COVID-19, it is recommended that you self-quarantine and stay away from other people as much as possible for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the person. It is recommended you get tested but not until 7 to 10 days after your last contact with the person who tested positive or immediately if you develop symptoms. It takes time for the virus to build up in your body so it can become detected by the lab test. You must complete the full 14 days of quarantine even if you test negative because it is possible the virus was not yet able to be detected by the lab test. The virus is spread primarily from person to person through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth or nose. That is why it is so important to wash your hands often and clean **frequently touched surfaces** at least daily

## **I was in the same room/building as someone who tested positive COVID-19, but not in close contact with him/her. What should I do?**

If you were not in close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or longer) with someone with COVID-19, your risk of catching the virus from that person is low. If you have not been notified by the school or the ND Department of Health that you or your student have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19, you do not need to quarantine. Follow the general precautions, including social distancing, washing your hands often, wear a mask and avoid close contact with people who are sick.

## **I have been around someone else who was exposed to a person with COVID-19. What should I do?**

To be exposed to COVID-19 you must be around the person who had it when they had symptoms or within 2 days of when their symptoms started. If you were not, you may not have been exposed to the virus. People who have been around a close contact do not need to quarantine. It is recommended to watch for symptoms and if they develop, consult with your healthcare provider to discuss the need for testing.

## **I live in the same house as someone who is under quarantine. What should I do?**

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to a contagious disease, like COVID-19, to see if they become sick and prevent spread of disease. For COVID-19, the quarantine period is 14 days after the person's last exposure to someone with COVID-19. If you are in a house with a quarantined individual, that person should try as much as possible to keep their distance from the others in the house. This can understandably be a great challenge, especially when the quarantined individual is a child or a parent caring for a child.

Try to keep the person in their own room, if possible and use a separate bathroom, if available. Before going into shared areas, the person quarantining should wash their hands, try to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others, and cover any coughs or sneezes. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and do not share personal household items like dishes, glasses, utensils or towels. Others in the house should also maintain good hand washing habits. The quarantined individual should immediately isolate if they become sick and contact his/her healthcare provider to be tested.

## **Should I get tested if I am not sick?**

The test that is done with a swab of the nose or mouth detects if the virus is present. There is a delay between the time that someone is exposed to the virus and the time the virus can be detected through this testing. It can only be reliably detected when someone is sick with symptoms. If someone tests negative for the virus when they are not sick, this does not mean they will not eventually become sick. This should be considered when someone gets tested when they do not have symptoms. If you were a close contact to someone contagious with the virus, it is recommended you get tested but not until 7 to 10 days after your last contact with the person who tested positive or immediately if you develop symptoms.

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