



WHEN IS IT SAFE TO BE AROUND OTHERS: ISOLATION AND WHEN TO END ISOLATION*

8/22/22



If you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19, you should isolate (stay home and away from others)

- This applies when you have a **positive** COVID-19 test – even if you have been vaccinated and even if you do not have **symptoms**. It also applies to when you have **symptoms** and are waiting on a test result or are unable to get tested.
- Stay home for at least **5 days** (Days 0–5)
 - If you **have** symptoms, count the day that your first symptom appeared as **Day 0**
 - If you do **not have** symptoms, count the day that you got tested as **Day 0**
- During **isolation** at home:
 - **Monitor** your health and contact your healthcare provider if your **symptoms** worsen
 - **Separate** yourself from other people and pets as much as possible
 - **Wear a high-quality mask** if you cannot separate from others
 - **Stay** in a separate “sick room” and use a separate bathroom, if possible
 - **Do not go** to public settings or travel
 - **Take steps** to improve **ventilation** at home, if possible



If you have **COVID-19 symptoms**, you can end isolation (leave your home) after Day 5 if these things have happened:

- **At least 5 full days** have passed since symptoms first appeared, **and**
- You are **fever-free** for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, **and**
- Your **other symptoms** have improved
 - *Note that loss of taste and smell might persist for weeks or months and this should not delay the end of isolation.*



If you did not have **COVID-19 symptoms**, you can end isolation (leave your home) after Day 5 if this has happened:

- **At least 5 full days** have passed since you were tested



If you end isolation after Day 5, you should still follow these steps on Days 6–10:

- **Wear a high-quality mask** around others at home and in public. Visit [CDC's website](#) to see how you might be able to stop wearing a mask earlier.
- **Do not travel**, avoid people who have **weakened immune systems or who are at high risk for severe COVID-19**, avoid places where you are unable to wear a mask, and avoid other people when you are eating.

**Based on CDC guidance for [Isolation](#). This VDH guidance applies to general community settings, including K-12 schools, colleges and universities, and workplaces. [Child care facilities](#) may apply this guidance for children ages 2 years and older and staff who can consistently and correctly wear well-fitting masks. It does not apply to healthcare facilities or high-risk congregate settings (e.g., correctional and detention facilities, homeless shelters, or cruise ships). People with severe COVID-19 or weakened immune systems might need to isolate (stay home) longer than 10 days. They should talk with their healthcare provider about when it is safe to be around others.*