



Guidance on Self Isolation for a Positive COVID Test or Close Contact with a COVID Positive Individual

Learning About Coronavirus (COVID-19):

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses. Most of them cause the common cold. They can also cause more serious illnesses like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). COVID-19 is caused by a novel coronavirus, meaning it is a new type of virus that has not been seen in people before. It is an illness that was first discovered in December 2019 and has since spread worldwide. The virus can cause fever, cough, trouble breathing and a variety of other symptoms such as sinus symptoms, loss of smell or taste, sore throat, runny nose, headache, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. The symptoms can vary from being completely asymptomatic to having serious, concerning symptoms. In severe cases, COVID-19 can lead to death.

COVID-19 spreads person-to-person through droplets from coughing and sneezing or when you are close to someone who is infected. The virus can also spread when you touch something that has the virus on it, such as a doorknob or a tabletop and then touch your face. Therefore, it is imperative to wear your mask, wash your hands frequently, disinfect shared surfaces regularly and maintain social distance when possible.

How COVID-19 Impacts You:

If you test positive for COVID-19, you need to go into self-isolation even if you are asymptomatic. This means you should remain in one room, put a mask on if someone else has to come into the room (and ask them to put a mask on as well), and remain diligent about washing your hands, wiping down surfaces and maintaining minimal contact even with those in your friend/family circle. You should remain in isolation for at least 10 days from the start of your symptoms and longer if you are not fever-free or not feeling better at the end of this 10-day period.

If you have come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or if you are awaiting test results, you and all members of your household should self-quarantine and not leave your house. When you have had close contact, you need to quarantine for a total of 10 days from the last day of exposure to the person with COVID-19 (although you should continue to monitor symptoms for 14 days). If you are awaiting test results but have not had close contact to someone with COVID-19, you may come out of quarantine if you have a negative test as long as you do not have any symptoms.

Further Tips for Self-Isolation:

- Limit contact with people in your home. If possible, stay in a separate bedroom and use a separate bathroom.
- Wear a cloth face cover when you are around other people. It can help stop the spread of the virus when you cough or sneeze. If you must leave your home to seek medical attention, avoid crowds and try to stay at least 6 feet away from other people.
- Avoid contact with pets and other animals.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it in the trash right away.
- Wash your hands often, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use soap and water, and scrub for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Do not share personal household items, including bedding, towels, cups, and glasses, and eating utensils.

- Wash laundry in the warmest water allowed for the fabric type and dry it completely. It is okay to wash other people's laundry with yours.
- Clean and disinfect your home regularly every day with household cleaners and disinfectant wipes or sprays. Take special care to clean things that you grab with your hands. These include doorknobs, remote controls, phones, and handles on your refrigerator and microwave. Do not forget about countertops, tabletops, bathrooms, and computer keyboards.

Please refer to the CDC guidelines regarding self-isolation, self-care and when to come out of isolation below for further guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fstrategy-discontinue-isolation.html

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

Here is a list of some of the salient points that will hopefully help you feel better soon:

1. Rest
2. Hydrate (decaffeinated fluids such as herbal tea and raw honey to help soothe your throat, if your provider advises this is okay)
3. Gargle with saltwater (4 oz warm water with ¼ tsp salt)
4. Consider using a Neti pot or sinus rinse bottle if you develop sinus symptoms to help alleviate sinus pressure. Remember to use distilled water and the packets that are enclosed with the sinus rinse bottle.
5. If you develop postnasal drip, you can use nasal saline spray or Ayr Gel, which can be purchased over the counter.
6. Your provider may recommend using an over-the-counter medication such as Zyrtec or Claritin and/or a nasal steroid spray such as Flonase Sensimist. Please refer to your discharge instructions for specific details.
7. Take time for self-care to help reduce stress.
8. Eat a balanced diet.

When to Call for Help:

Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care.

Life-threatening symptoms include:

- Severe trouble breathing.
- Continuous chest pain or pressure.
- Significant dizziness or lightheadedness
- Confusion or inability to think clearly
- Blue lips or face
- Loss of consciousness or lethargy
- Any other concerning, worsening/worrisome symptoms that arise.

Call the office if:

- You are not getting better as expected.
- You have questions regarding the course of your condition.