



Fact Sheet About COVID-19 Close Contacts and Quarantine

What is a close contact?

According to the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), you generally need to be in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 *while they are contagious* to get infected. Close contact includes the following:

- Living with a person who has COVID-19,
- Providing care for a person who has COVID-19,
- Being within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19 for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period, or
- Having direct exposure to respiratory secretions (e.g., being coughed or sneezed on, sharing a drinking glass or utensils; kissing).

A person with COVID-19 is considered to be contagious starting from 2 days before they became sick or 2 days before they tested positive if they never had symptoms until they meet the [criteria to discontinue isolation](#).

What is quarantine?

Quarantine separates people who have had close contact with someone infected with the COVID-19 virus but do not currently have symptoms and have not tested positive. The purpose is to prevent possibly spreading the virus by avoiding contact with others while monitoring for symptoms of illness. The length of quarantine is 14 days from the date of the last contact with the person with COVID-19, as long as the person in quarantine remains healthy.

Is a person in quarantine considered to have COVID-19, and will their close contacts be quarantined?

The fact that a person has been placed in quarantine *does not* mean that they have COVID-19. It also *does not* mean that the person in quarantine has exposed others to COVID-19. A person in quarantine may be tested for COVID-19 5-7 days following their exposure to someone with COVID-19. If they test negative, they must remain in quarantine for 14 days from the date of their exposure. If they test positive, they will need to isolate for at least 10 days from the date of symptom onset or, if they have no symptoms, from the date of their positive test. If they test positive, their close contacts, if any, will be contacted and placed in quarantine.

I am a close contact of someone in quarantine. Why haven't I been contacted by the Virginia Department of Health contact tracers?

Contact tracing does not begin until there is a confirmed case of COVID-19. A person in quarantine has not been confirmed to have COVID-19. If the person in quarantine tests positive for COVID-19, a VDH Case Investigator will interview the person to identify any close contacts they may have. If you are determined to be a close contact, then the VDH contact tracers will reach out to you. If you are a close contact of someone in quarantine who has *not* tested positive for COVID-19, VDH will not contact you.

I am a close contact of someone in quarantine. Why haven't I been placed in quarantine too?

You have not been placed in quarantine at this time because the person in quarantine has not been diagnosed with COVID-19. They are in quarantine for 14 days as a precaution and may be tested 5-7 days after their exposure to someone with COVID-19. You will only be placed in quarantine if the person in quarantine tests positive and you are deemed to be a close contact of that person.

What should I do until the person in quarantine is tested?

The best thing any of us can do at all times to protect ourselves and others is to strictly comply with public health and safety protocols, including wearing a face covering and maintaining 6 feet of physical distance.