



When To Be Tested for COVID-19

Could I have COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. The most common way in which COVID-19 is acquired is through close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19. However, community transmission is now happening. Community transmission occurs when a virus spreads and the source is not known.

Should I go to my doctor and get tested for COVID-19?

If you have symptoms you think are due this virus you should call your health care provider. Your health care provider will assess your symptoms and will determine if you should be tested. It is important that everyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 seek care to confirm diagnosis. This will allow you to receive appropriate advice on caring for yourself and preventing spread to your family, friends, and other close contacts. This is especially important for individuals at high risk for complications from COVID-19 such as:

- Older adults
- People with weakened immune systems
- People with underlying health conditions
- Pregnant women

People in close contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19 are at higher risk of getting infected themselves, and infecting others. Close contacts are defined as someone who was within 6 feet of a case, for at least 10-15 minutes, while the infected person had symptoms or within the 48 hours before symptoms started. The local board of health will notify you if you are considered a close contact with an infected person. You should be tested as soon as possible after notification.

If you are a health care worker in contact with patients or other health care workers, or if you are a first responder (EMS, fire, police), you need to be tested regardless of the high-risk criteria **if you become symptomatic**.

If I think I may have COVID-19 or another respiratory infection, what should I do to keep my infection from spreading to my family and other people in the community?

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- Do not use public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home.
 - As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. If you must share a bathroom, you or your housemates should clean surfaces regularly (see below).
 - Wear a surgical type mask or cover your nose and mouth with a scarf or other cloth if you are in the same room with others.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you need to have a medical visit, call the health care provider and tell them that you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting exposed or infected.

Wear a facemask or face covering

- Wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office.

- If you do not have a face mask, cover your nose and mouth with a scarf or other home-made face covering (such as a cut-up tee shirt or similar).

If you are not able to wear a face covering (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can. If you do not have a tissue, cover your cough or sneeze with your arm/elbow, not your hand.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if water and soap are not available.

Avoid sharing personal household items

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home.
- After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching surfaces and objects that others touch frequently (“high-touch” surfaces) with unwashed hands.

Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day

- High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.
- Clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions.

Monitor your symptoms

- Seek medical attention right away if your illness is gets worse (e.g., difficulty breathing).
- Before seeking care, call your health care provider and tell them that your symptoms are consistent with COVID-19.
- Put on a facemask before you enter the facility.
- If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

When can I end home isolation?

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should remain under home isolation precautions until it is determined that you are no longer contagious. Your local public health department will communicate this with you. If you were unable to get tested but were told to isolate by a medical provider, please reach out to your primary care provider for guidance on release from isolation. If you do not have a primary care provider call the *Mayor’s Health Line* at 617-534-5050.

