

When to Take an At-Home COVID-19 Self-Test

At-home tests help you find out if you have COVID-19 so you can prevent spreading it to others. Here are scenarios and considerations to help you decide when to take an at-home COVID-19 test and what to do when you get your results.

You have symptoms of COVID-19.



Common symptoms are fever, coughing, shortness of breath, fatigue, and body aches.

You had close contact with someone who has COVID-19.



Wear a high-quality mask right away and get tested at least 5 days after your close contact.

You will be with someone who is at high risk for COVID-19.



Test right before meeting anyone who is immunocompromised or is at high risk for severe COVID-19.

You plan to attend an event or gathering.



Consider testing right before you go to an indoor gathering as an extra safety measure.



Take an At-Home COVID-19 Test



If your at-home COVID-19 test is **positive**:

Stay home and isolate away from others for **at least 5 days** after testing positive.

When to end isolation:

- After **5 days** if you have been fever-free for 24 hours and you had *mild or no* symptoms.
- After **10 days** if your COVID-19 symptoms were serious or severe and/or you are *immunocompromised*.
Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

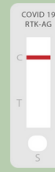
If you ended isolation but your COVID-19 symptoms **come back or get worse**, you should restart your isolation from **day 0**. Take another at-home COVID-19 test to make sure you are **no longer infected**.

Continued precautions:

After you have ended isolation and have no more symptoms, **wear a high quality mask for 10 days** when around others.

When to contact a healthcare provider:

- If you are at high risk for severe COVID-19 and want antiviral medication.
- **Get medical care right away** if you have severe symptoms like difficulty breathing or chest pain.



If your at-home COVID-19 test is **negative**:

Take another test 24–48 hours after your first test, especially if you have symptoms.

It is still possible to have COVID-19 even with a **negative result**. Keep practicing safe public health measures.

Continued precautions:

If you were exposed to COVID-19, continue to protect yourself and others:

- wear a high-quality mask for 10 days after exposure, **even if you test negative**.
- **Take another test** if you will be in close contact with others, especially high-risk individuals.

Follow the [CDC guidelines on COVID-19 exposure](#).

When to contact a healthcare provider:

If you continue to test negative but still have COVID-19 symptoms, contact your healthcare provider.



Recommendations are from the CDC and current as of February 2023. For the latest COVID-19 information and testing guidelines, visit [CDC.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).