Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Guidance Based on Test Results

> **Recent Updates:**
> 7/24/20: Home Isolation period changed from 3 days to 24 hours with no fever. The period that someone is considered to be infectious, changed from 48 hours to 2 days before symptoms begin.
> 7/1/20: Symptoms of COVID-19 updated and links to reference documents added.

1. How are Coronaviruses spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing or talking.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild or no symptoms to people becoming severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and dying.

Symptoms may include the following: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive.

If you develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, or your healthcare provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, you should self-isolate at home. If you develop other symptoms listed above or other worrying symptoms that are not on the list, please consult your provider about the need for testing and isolation.

3. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways, is there anything that I should be doing while I wait for my test results.

We do not recommend that asymptomatic individuals get tested for COVID-19 unless they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 but if you do get tested even though you don't have symptoms, you should continue to follow recommended physical (social) distancing practices, such as staying home and staying at least 6 feet away from others when you are outside your home until your test results are back. You should also use a cloth face covering whenever you leave the home and are around others that are not part of your household. If you were a contact to a suspected or positive case of COVID-19 you should remain in quarantine at your home and away from others until your results are back and then follow the guidance below based on what those results show.

4. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways and my test is negative is there anything I should do?

When leaving your home, follow recommended physical distancing practices by staying at least 6 feet away from others and using a cloth face covering when you are in contact with others outside your home. It is important to note that a negative test result may just mean that you were not infected at the time the test was done but you could still become infected at a later point so it is important to continue to practice prevention measures such as physical distancing and washing your hands frequently.

It is important to note that if you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you were tested you should remain in quarantine for the full 14 days even if your test comes back negative. This is because the incubation period for the virus can be up to 14 days and unless you were tested on the 14th day from your exposure, a negative test earlier in the quarantine period does not mean you are not infected.

5. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways and my test is positive is there anything I should do?

Even though you don't have symptoms if your test comes back positive you should stay home and away from the public for at least 10 days from when you were tested. As we learn more about the novel coronavirus, we are finding that people can be infectious even before they start to show symptoms. It could be that your test was done before your symptoms began or that you won't show symptoms at all.

If you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you were tested you can be released as soon as you have completed 10 days from the date of your test even if this is before your quarantine period is over, as long as you remain symptom-free. If you develop symptoms, you need to follow the instructions in Question 6 below.

6. I did not have symptoms when I tested positive for COVID-19 but I developed symptoms during my isolation period. Do I have to stay in isolation for longer?

The clock resets if you develop symptoms during your isolation period. If you develop symptoms you have to stay isolated at home for at least 24 hours after your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND there is improvement in your symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

If you were a contact to a suspected case and were in quarantine when your symptoms developed you must follow the isolation instructions for people with symptoms.

7. I have symptoms and just got tested for COVID-19 is there anything I should do while waiting for my test results?

You should stay home and self-isolate until the test results are back. See the guidance for home care on the public health website that tells you how to take care of yourself while you are at home waiting for your test results. See the sections below for what to do once your results are back.

Be sure to tell all your close contact they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Refer to the health officer order for home quarantine.

8. I have symptoms and got tested for COVID-19 but my results are negative is there anything I should be doing?

If you are symptomatic but have negative test results for COVID-19, we still recommend that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever has resolved without the use of fever- reducing medications, AND there is improvement in your symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

It is important to note that if you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you got tested you must remain in quarantine for the full 14 days even if your test results were negative.

9. I have symptoms and my test for COVID-19 is now positive what should I be doing?

You should continue to remain in isolation until at least 24 hours after your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications and there is improvement in your symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Follow instructions for home isolation found on the public health website and refer to the health officer orders for home isolation.

Be sure to tell all your close contacts they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Refer to the health officer order for home quarantine.

10. Do I still have to stay 6 feet away from others and wear a cloth face covering even after I come out of quarantine or isolation?

Since we are still learning more about the novel coronavirus and how long people can remain infectious, all individuals are required to stay 6 feet apart from others and wear a cloth face covering in public regardless of what their test results were or whether they have already been in isolation or quarantine.