

## From our Registered Nurse:

### What to do if you test positive for COVID-19

Testing positive for COVID-19 can be frightening, but remember, most cases are like a regular cold or flu or even less. It is much rarer to have a serious case than a light one. While it doesn't get reported on in the news as much, several million people have recovered from this disease. You are very likely to be one of them.

#### Physically Isolate Yourself

You are going to need to **shift your quarantine to full isolation**. By the time you've gotten your test results, you have likely been quarantining for a few days already. Here are the changes you'll need to make to upgrade your quarantine:

**Do not leave your home unless it is to get medical help.** If you do have to go out for essential medical care, wear a mask to leave home. Do not go to any medical facility without calling ahead and letting them know you have the virus. They will probably have guidelines on how you should enter their facility.

Continue to **treat your symptoms with the same over the counter medications that you use for a cold or flu**. Do not take any experimental treatments you may have heard about recently. Right now, the only medicines approved for the coronavirus will come through a doctor's order and none of the non-medical "cures" being passed around are effective.

If you live alone, consider putting a sign on your door asking delivery people to leave packages out front instead of coming in.

**If you live with other people, try to limit yourself to one room or area of your home and wear a mask if you need to leave that room.** Open windows when you can to cycle the air. Eat separately from others. If possible, use a separate bathroom from your housemates/family. If you share a bathroom, disinfect it after each use. Do your best to have as little direct contact with the people you live with, especially those who are older or have health conditions already.

Remember that it is very likely that people who live together will get infected from each other, even with careful isolation. Do not beat yourself up if your isolation isn't perfect. Blaming yourself for exposing your housemates/family will not help them or you.

#### Expect a Call from a Contact Tracer

You will probably get a call from a Contact Tracer. They will ask about who you've been in close contact with recently and reach out to these people to help them get tested but will not mention your name. Sharing this information will help other people quarantine before they pass the virus on themselves. Tracers can also help connect you with resources to support you while you are sick.



## Stay Connected

**Let friends and family know that you are sick and how you are doing.** Feel free to accept care packages or grocery deliveries left at your door but you should refuse offers for people to come take care of you. If you are sick enough to need direct care, you probably should be in the hospital.

## Monitor Symptoms Carefully

Continue to monitor your symptoms. **Check your temperature every day.** Watching for when your fever goes down is one of the steps that will let you know when you can end your isolation. Be especially aware of any trouble breathing, ongoing chest pain, difficulty waking up or staying awake, or bluish lips. These are advanced signs that your case is getting more serious. Call your doctor or 911 immediately and let them know. You will likely have to go to the hospital.

## Ending Your Isolation

Eventually you will be able to end your isolation and return to a more normal life.

**If you never had any symptoms, you can end your isolation 10 days after your positive test.** Your doctor may also have you take additional tests.

**If you did have symptoms, you will need to wait until all three of the following are true:**

- 1- It has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started.**
- 2- Your symptoms are getting better.**
- 3- You have not had a fever (100.5 F or higher) for 3 days.**

Remember that medicines like Tylenol lower your temperature. Do not start counting days without a fever until they happen without needing medicine.

After your isolation ends, take some time to congratulate yourself. You have gotten through one of the most difficult and stressful experiences of our time. Let your friends and family know that you are doing better. They will probably want to congratulate you as well and your recovery will help them feel better about this difficult time.

Before you rejoin your family, **thoroughly clean and disinfect your sick room.** You are probably not contagious anymore, but there may still be some virus particles in the room. Also, any room that a person has been living in for over a week is going to be a bit smelly.

It is very likely that you will be immune to COVID for several months after you have recovered. That said, you should still **continue to practice physical distancing and wear a mask in public.** The people around you in the grocery store will not know you have recovered and will feel uncomfortable if you are not wearing your mask. Also, we do not yet know how good this immunity is or how long it will last. It may only last a short time or only give partial protection.



# MassSupport Network

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Sources:

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<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/living-in-close-quarters.html>

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[www.masssupport.org](http://www.masssupport.org)