



COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A CLOSE CONTACT OF A PERSON WITH CONFIRMED COVID-19 AND HAVE TO HOME QUARANTINE

This advice is intended for people who are close contacts of a person with confirmed COVID-19, do not have any symptoms and have been asked to quarantine at home. This guidance does not apply to people who have been asked to quarantine in a designated facility.

What does being a close contact mean?

You have been in close contact with someone who has confirmed COVID-19, but you do not have any symptoms yourself. Close contact means that you had face-to-face contact within 1 metre or were in a closed space for more than 15 minutes with a person with COVID-19. This contact happened while the person with COVID-19 was still “infectious”, i.e. from 2 days before to 14 days after their symptoms began. For example, you may be someone who:

1. Lives in the same household as a person with COVID-19
2. Works closely in the same environment as a person with COVID-19
3. Sat in the same classroom as a person with COVID-19
4. Attended the same gathering as a person with COVID-19
5. Provided direct care for a person with COVID-19 in a healthcare setting without using the proper personal protective equipment
6. Sat within two seats (1 metre) in any direction of a person with COVID-19 case in any kind of vehicle including buses, minibus taxis, airplane, etc.
7. Served as a crew member in the section of an aircraft where a person with COVID-19 was seated

Who will be in touch with me from the government or National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)?

The person with COVID-19, with whom you were in close contact, made a list of all the people he/she had close contact with from 2 days before they became ill. You may therefore be called, visited at home or otherwise contacted by government officials, community health workers and/or the NICD. The purpose of this contact is to assist you to self-quarantine at home for 14 days after your last contact and to monitor you for symptoms.

Will I be tested for COVID-19 as a close contact?

You will only have a laboratory test performed if you develop symptoms within 14 days of your last close contact with a person with COVID-19.

Will my own close contacts be tested for COVID-19?

No, your close contacts will only have laboratory testing if you are first confirmed to have COVID-19 and they develop symptoms.

Why have I been asked to quarantine at home?

You have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 during the time in which they were able to transmit the infection. It is therefore possible that you have been infected with COVID-19. Staying at home in quarantine will help to control the possible spread of the virus to your friends, relatives and your wider community. In particular, staying at home will help prevent possible spread to the most vulnerable people in our communities, including the elderly and persons with medical conditions that put them at increased risk for severe illness.

COVID-19 is spread by droplets. When an infected person coughs, exhales or sneezes, they release droplets of fluid containing the virus. Other people can become infected by breathing in these droplets if they are standing within a few meters from the infected person. The larger droplets can also fall on nearby surfaces and objects. The virus can survive on hard surfaces (plastic and stainless steel, for example) for up to 72 hours. Other people can become infected when they touch contaminated surface, then touch their eyes, nose or mouth. People cannot be infected through the skin.

If you understand how coronavirus disease spreads, this will help you to understand how to prevent spreading the infection to others. Stay a few meters away from other people, and at frequent intervals wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.

What does home quarantine mean for me?

Stay at home. Do not go to work, school, or any public areas. If necessary, talk to your employer and let them know that you cannot come to work. Do not use any public transport (including buses, minibus taxis and taxi cabs). Do not travel. You should cancel all your routine medical and dental appointments. If possible, you should not even go out to buy food, medicines or other essentials. You should ask friends or relatives to help you to buy groceries and essentials. You should not go outside to exercise. You should not have any visitors in your home during your quarantine period. Do keep in touch with your relatives, friends and colleagues over the phone, internet or by using social media.

What does my home quarantine mean for other people who live in my household?

If you live with other people, as far as possible, you should stay in a separate room and away from other people in your household. If a separate room is not possible, try to keep to one area of your home, at least 2 meters (3 steps) away from other people. Wash your hands regularly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitisers (containing at least 60% alcohol). If possible, use a separate bathroom. If you have to share a bathroom, clean the bathroom after every use. If you share a kitchen, avoid using the kitchen at the same time as other people. If possible, have your meals in your separate room/area and use separate utensils.

What do I do if I live with children?

If you live with children, you should keep following this advice to the best of your ability. However, we understand that this advice will be difficult to follow with younger children. Consider further limiting your children's contact with other children during this period.

How long will I need to quarantine at home?

You can end your home quarantine 14 days after your last contact with a person with COVID-19. No laboratory tests will be done at any time during your home quarantine period, unless you develop symptoms.

Do other members of my household need to stay at home during my quarantine period?

If you live with other people, and you are able to stay physically apart from them, they can continue their usual activities outside the home. If you are unable to stay apart from members of your household, they should also quarantine for the same period.

What symptoms do I need to monitor for during my home quarantine?

If you develop a fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches or other flu-like symptoms from 2 to 14 days after your close contact with a person with COVID-19, you should immediately contact your healthcare provider. If you become ill, you should practice good cough hygiene - cover your mouth and nose if you sneeze or cough with disposable face tissue or into your elbow. Dispose of tissues then immediately wash your hands. Wash your hands regularly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (containing at least 60% alcohol).

Source:

NICD website:

<https://www.nicd.ac.za/what-to-do-if-i-am-a-close-contact-of-a-person-with-confirmed-disease-and-am-asked-to-home-quarantine/>

Call the COVID-19 Hotline: 0800 029 999

Send “hi” on WhatsApp to COVID-19 Connect: 060 012 3456

Visit the website www.sacoronavirus.co.za