FAQs

How Long Should I Stay in Quarantine?

Quarantine keeps someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. The [Alameda County Quarantine Order](#) lists all the quarantine rules.

Do I need to quarantine if I'm fully vaccinated[1]?

In most cases, no!

If you are fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms, you do not need to quarantine after close contact[2] with someone who has COVID-19.

Most fully vaccinated people who do not have symptoms can also return to work after close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

There are some exceptions:

- Fully vaccinated people who live in a high-risk group setting, like a long-term care facility, should still quarantine for 14 days after a close contact.

- Healthcare providers[3] should follow the return-to-work guidance in the [California Department of Public Health AFL 21-08.2](#).

How long should I quarantine if I'm NOT fully vaccinated?

If you are not fully vaccinated, a 14-day quarantine is the safest way to protect other people and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

This is especially important if you are in regular close contact with anyone at high risk for severe disease, such as someone who is immunocompromised.

If you live or work in a group setting[4], you must quarantine for 14 days after your last close contact.

How do I count 14 days of quarantine?

The last day of close contact with an infected person is called "Day 0". If you have no symptoms and your test is negative (if tested), your 14-day quarantine ends on Day 15.

For example, if your last close contact was on June 1st, the first day of quarantine is June 2nd and the last day is June 15th.

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1 Fully vaccinated means it has been ≥2 weeks following the final (or only) dose of a vaccine approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or World Health Organization (WHO).

2 Close contact means that you were within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive person for a total of 15 minutes or longer, even if both of you were wearing masks. Shorter periods that add up to 15 minutes on the same day also count. Close contact can also mean that you had a briefer but major exposure to the COVID-19 positive person's respiratory droplets. For example, the sick person coughed directly on you. Healthcare providers with a close contact should continue to follow [CDC risk assessment guidance](#).

3 Health Care Personnel are defined as persons, both paid and unpaid, working in patient care areas who could be exposed to infectious agents (e.g., blood, tissue, body fluids as well as contaminated equipment, surfaces, or air). HCP should be considered exposed at work using CDC's [Guidance for Risk Assessment and Work Restrictions for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19](#).

4Group settings include long-term care facilities, correctional facilities, Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels, dormitories, shelters for unhoused persons.

Who can end quarantine after 10 days?

You may end quarantine after 10 days if you have not had any symptoms and are not in regular close contact with anyone at high risk for severe disease. For example, if your last close contact was on June 1st, the first day of a 10-day quarantine is June 2nd and the last day is June 11th.

If you quarantine for less than 14 days, you must:

- Monitor yourself for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days. If you develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate, contact your healthcare provider, and get tested.

- Use a face covering (mask) and stay at least 6 feet from others when outside your home for 14 days.

Do I need to quarantine if I've had COVID-19 but am not fully vaccinated?

If you had COVID-19 in the past 3 months and you do not have any symptoms, you do NOT need to quarantine or get tested.

If you develop symptoms within 3 months, contact your healthcare provider. You may need to be tested again.

Should I get tested during quarantine?

If you develop symptoms during quarantine, you should get tested right away. Even if you do not develop symptoms, ACPHD recommends testing on or after Day 5 (but before Day 10).

Who is allowed to return to work before the end of quarantine?

Healthcare providers (HCP) at licensed acute care and skilled nursing facilities should follow the guidance in the California Department of Public Health AFL 21.08.2. However, HCP in other settings should be excluded from work during their quarantine period, unless there are critical staff shortages.[5]

Emergency response workers and social services workers who work face-to-face with clients in the child welfare system or assisted living facilities may also return to work before the end of quarantine during critical staffing shortages.

For more information about these special situations, please see the Alameda County Quarantine Order.

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5 Critical staffing shortages occur when there are no longer enough staff to provide safe patient, resident, or inmate care. When a critical staffing shortage occurs in a health care setting, facilities should strongly consider cancelling non-essential visits and procedures, adjusting staff schedules, cancelling, or delaying employee leave, hiring additional HCP, and rotating HCP to positions that support patient care activities. More information on critical staffing shortages can be found in CDC's Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages. *LTCF experiencing a critical staffing shortage during an outbreak should consult with ACPHD for additional quarantine guidance.*