



What to Know if You Have Been Diagnosed with COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What does the test mean? Am I contagious?

- The test looks for genetic material from the virus that causes COVID-19. A positive test means that you either are infected with the virus now or were recently infected in the past two months.
- Most people who have a positive test are contagious and should go home right away to prevent from infecting others.
 - If you have any symptoms now, you should assume you are contagious. Symptoms can be mild to severe, and can include: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, muscle aches, unexpected fatigue, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, headache, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, and other cold symptoms
 - If you never had symptoms, you should still assume you are contagious. Some people don't have symptoms even though they are infected with the virus. They still can give it to others. Some people who have a positive test and are feeling fine may develop symptoms in the next day or two.

What can I expect from this disease?

- For many people, COVID-19 causes a bad cold or flu-like syndrome. It can last 1-3 weeks, but sometimes longer. Many people experience a stuttering course, with symptoms that seem to improve and then come back. This can include fevers, chills, muscle aches, fatigue, and respiratory symptoms.
- Be sure to let your doctor know you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and how you are feeling.
- Some people can get worse in the second week of illness. Be careful to watch for this. If you have trouble breathing, cannot eat or drink, feel very weak, or otherwise need help, be sure to call 911. Be sure to speak to your doctor right away even if you don't yet need to go to the emergency department, but you are feeling worse.
- Be especially careful if you have risk factors for more serious disease. These risk factors include age ≥ 60 , obesity, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease. If you have these conditions, you should seek medical attention early so that your doctor can monitor how you are doing.

How can I best take care of myself?

There are many things you should do to help yourself recover.

- Go home. You need plenty of rest and sleep. Be sure to eat well and drink plenty of liquids. Monitor your temperature.
- Make sure someone knows that you are sick so that they can check in on you by phone or in person if they live with you. If you live alone, you may need friends or family to drop off food at your door and call you often to see how you are doing.
- Stay home. Do not go to work unless you are told by your doctor that you are no longer contagious. Do not go to the grocery store or out of the house while you are contagious. Have food and drink brought to you by others.

How can I protect my family and others?

- See the document called “Keeping Family Safe if You have COVID-19”

Who gave me COVID-19?

- It is often not possible to know how you caught COVID-19 because we are in the middle of a COVID-19 pandemic and cases are common in the community. This means that you can pick up COVID-19 at the grocery store, at the gas station, or in other places where people are. Nevertheless, here are some clues that can help:
 - You would have caught COVID-19 from someone you had contact with 2 to 14 days before you first developed symptoms.
 - Usually the person who gave you COVID-19 would have been sick with it, but this is not always the case.
 - If someone in your home or someone you have close contact with has recently been sick with cold or flu-like symptoms, that person could have been a source.
 - If someone at work has been recently sick and you touched common environmental objects and then touched your face without cleaning your hands, you may have picked up COVID-19 at work.
 - If you cared for a patient with COVID-19 without the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), that could also be a source.

Who do I need to contact?

- Call your doctor’s office to let them know you have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Your doctor can answer your questions and give you medical advice.
- Call your supervisor to let them know that you will not be working until you are well and not contagious.
- Call your family or housemates to let them know how you are doing so they can check on you. Tell someone if you need help with food, drink or something else. Let them know some of the information in this document or the document called “Keeping Family Safe if You have COVID-19”
- Call contacts who you have closely interacted with while you have been ill and let them know to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19.

When can I return to work?

We recommend that you use the CDC's time and symptom-based return to work strategy. This guidance requires the below to return to work

- Your symptoms have greatly improved
- At least 10 days have passed since your first symptoms began*
- At least 24 hours have passed since your last fever of >99F, without fever-lowering medications
- You feel well enough to return to work

Speak with your doctor to ensure that you are cleared to return to work.

* NOTE: If your COVID illness involved hospitalization for difficulty breathing, or you are "immunocompromised" due to cancer chemotherapy, organ transplant, or medications that reduce your ability to fight infection, CDC recommends that you return to work after 20 days have passed since first symptoms began AND symptoms have greatly improved AND you have not had any temperature >99F for 24 hours.

Where can I go to learn more?

- Speak with your doctor
- Additional information on what to do if you are sick can be found at the CDC website or at the California Department of Public Health website
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>
 - <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx#What%20if%20I'm%20sick?>
- Refer to the **OC Nursing Home COVID-19 Infection Prevention Toolkit** for more information and additional FAQs at ucihealth.org/stopcovid