

CORONAVIRUS • COVID-19

QUARANTINE VS. ISOLATION

Throughout this pandemic, we have frequently heard terms such as *hunker down, isolation, and quarantine*. These terms are similar, but have slightly different meanings. All three are public health practices used to prevent people from exposure to individuals who have or may have a contagious disease.

Hunker down limits residents to staying home as much as possible. They can leave the home to work in critical jobs, get food and important goods, seek health care, and recreate outside. During a hunker down, communities are asked to close all non-critical businesses. While similar to quarantine, hunker down is less restrictive. We limit unnecessary interactions, such as attending public gatherings or going to the store, but don't completely avoid them.

Quarantine and isolation require individuals to stay home; or, if they go outside, they must not be in a public space or within six feet of other people.

Isolation is used to separate individuals with COVID-19 from others, or to separate sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. If you are sick with symptoms of COVID-19 or test positive for COVID-19 you will be asked to self-isolate.

Individuals who are isolating should stay in another room of a home when possible. If you have to be around other people, like sharing a room or going to the clinic, wear a mask. Medical providers will give individuals who are isolating specific advice on when you may end home isolation.

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others, so they can monitor if they become sick. Quarantine helps to prevent spread of disease. People are asked to quarantine when they may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have been infected with the virus but do not show or feel symptoms.

People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health organizations.

Who needs to quarantine?

- Anyone who has been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19. If you are unable to separate from other household members while on quarantine, the entire household will be asked to quarantine with you. *Remember, close contacts must have been within six feet of someone with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.*
- You provided care at home to someone sick with COVID-19. You had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged, or kissed them). You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- Someone with COVID-19 sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

When to start and end quarantine

You should stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should continue to quarantine since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

Steps to take

Stay home and monitor your health

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person positive for COVID-19.
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or **other symptoms** of COVID-19.
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)
- If possible, stay away others, especially people who are at **higher risk** for getting very sick from COVID-19.
(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-increased-risk.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fneed-extra-precautions%2Fpeople-at-higher-risk.html)

REFERENCES

<https://www.hhs.gov/answers/public-health-and-safety/what-is-the-difference-between-isolation-and-quarantine/index.html>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine-isolation.html