

what do quarantine and isolation mean?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads easily from person to person. That's why health experts recommend avoiding large crowds and busy places, and staying at least 6 feet away from people you don't live with. This is called social distancing (or physical distancing).

But some people might need to do more than that. They might need to stay home for a set time and not leave even for work, errands, or exercise. This is known as **quarantine** or **isolation**. These differ depending on why a person needs to stay home and which precautions they must take.

Staying home for an extended time can be hard, especially if the person feels well enough to go out. But it's an important part of stopping the spread of the virus and protecting the community. Keeping your household ready can reduce stress in case that happens.

what does quarantine mean?

Quarantine: This is when someone *who might have been exposed to the virus but has no symptoms* needs to stay home. This is because they could be infected and could spread the virus, even though they feel well.

After contact with someone who has COVID-19 (or who tested positive), people need to quarantine if:

- They were within 6 feet of the person for at least 15 minutes.
- They care for that person at home.
- They shared dishes, cups, forks, or spoons with the person.
- The person coughed or sneezed on them.
- They touched, kissed, or hugged the person.

People also might need to quarantine if their local health department requires it after travel to an area where coronavirus is spreading rapidly.

what does isolation mean?

Isolation: This is when someone *who is infected with the virus and is contagious* needs to stay home. This helps to prevent spread of the virus to other people.

A person should isolate when:

- They have symptoms of COVID-19.
- They have tested positive for the virus (with or without symptoms).

how long should quarantine or isolation last?

Recommendations for how long people should quarantine or isolate change often and can vary depending on where you live. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website and your local health department websites for the latest updates.

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In general, a person should:

- **Quarantine** for 14 days (2 weeks) after contact with an infected person or after arriving home from traveling. They should watch for symptoms, which can show up 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.or
- **Isolate** for 10 days from the time their COVID-19 symptoms started, or from the date they tested positive. They can stop isolating 10 days after the start of their symptoms (or their positive test), as long as they've had 1 full day without a fever and their other symptoms have gotten better. If testing is easy to get, a health care provider may choose to send a person for two separate tests at least 24 hours apart. If both are negative, the person can stop isolating.

Someone who starts to feel sick during a 2-week quarantine should switch to isolation and add 10 more days. If they start to feel sick near the end of their quarantine period, it could mean staying at home for as long as 24 days. This can be very hard, but it is very important to do so to prevent spreading the virus to others.

A person in quarantine or isolation should work with their doctor and their local health department to make sure they follow the most current guidelines.

looking ahead

The coronavirus pandemic has affected most parts of our day-to-day lives. Handling those changes can be stressful for anyone. If your family has to quarantine or isolate, it can make things even harder.

Remind your kids that by staying home, you're protecting family members, friends, neighbors, and others in your community. Focus on the good you're doing, rather than what you're missing out on. Stay in touch with others with phone calls, video chats, and texts and emails. And remember that there is an end in sight.



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