**NC DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

Steps for People
After COVID-19 Testing

There are a number of reasons why you may be tested for COVID-19. It may be because you have COVID-19 symptoms, were a close contact of someone with COVID-19, are in a job or a population that may be at higher risk for exposure and suspect you may have been exposed to COVID-19; or are in a job or a population for which routine or repeat testing is recommended or required. The information below will help you to determine what you should do while you are waiting for your test results, and what to do after your test results are available.

COVID-19 symptoms include:
- Fever, chills, or repeated shaking/shivering
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Feeling unusually weak or fatigued

- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Runny or congested nose
- Diarrhea (loose stools 3 or more times a day)

What do I do while I wait for my test results?

If you have **any COVID-19 symptoms**, were tested because you were **exposed to someone with COVID-19**, or you **suspect you may have been exposed** to COVID-19, you should stay home and, as much as possible, avoid others in your household. In addition, if you were tested because you have COVID-19 symptoms, everyone in your household should stay at home as much as possible until your results are known.

If you were tested for COVID-19 but have no symptoms and no known or suspected exposure to someone with COVID-19 (for example, as part of a workplace screening program), you do not need to stay home while waiting for your results unless you are told to do so by your employer or by a public health official.

What if my test is negative?

If you were tested because you have symptoms, you should stay home until you have no fever without the use of fever-reducing medicines, and you have felt well for at least 24 hours.

If you were tested because you have symptoms and a healthcare provider still thinks you have COVID-19, even with a negative test, you should stay home and, as much as possible, avoid others in your household until you can say yes to **ALL three of the following questions:**
- Has it been at least 10 days since you first had symptoms?
- Has it been at least 72 hours (3 days) since you have had a fever without using fever-reducing medicine?
- Has it been at least 72 hours (3 days) since your other symptoms have improved (such as coughing and shortness of breath)?

If you were tested because of a known contact to someone with COVID-19, you should stay home and quarantine (avoid anyone in your household) until 14 days after the last time you were in contact with the person who tested positive. Having a negative test during that period is a good thing, but there is still a chance that it may take up to 14 days after exposure to COVID-19 for the virus to present itself and infect someone. That's why it is important that you monitor your symptoms closely. If you develop any of the above symptoms*, then you may have COVID-19. Check with your medical provider, the COVID-19 Community Team, or get tested again.

If you were tested for another reason that is not because of a known or suspected contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and have no symptoms, then you can resume your regular activities.

Everyone should continue to practice the 3 Ws (Wear. Wait. Wash.) whenever they leave home. Wearing a cloth covering over your mouth and nose if you will be with other people, waiting 6 feet apart from others, and washing your hands often can help protect you and your loved ones from the spread of this virus.

What if my test is positive?

Following CDC guidelines, if your test comes back positive and you had symptoms, you should stay home and, as much as possible, avoid others in your household until you can say yes **to ALL three of the following questions**:
- Has it been at least 10 days since you first had symptoms?
- Has it been at least 72 hours (3 days) since you have had a fever without using fever-reducing medicine?
- Has it been at least 72 hours (3 days) since your other symptoms have improved (such as coughing and shortness of breath)?

Following CDC guidelines, if your test comes back positive and you did not have symptoms, you should stay home and isolate (avoid anyone in your household) until 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming you did not develop symptoms since your positive test.

Additionally, if you have tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department or another member of the COVID-19 Community Team will call to ensure you have the information and support you need, such as tips for staying at home and monitoring symptoms.

To protect your family and friends and slow the spread of the virus, the COVID-19 Community Team member will also ask you who you have recently been near – for example, people living in your household or people who have been within 6 feet of you for more than 15 minutes. The COVID-19 Community Team will reach out to anyone who has been near you to share information and support, as well as help them get tested. They should stay home and quarantine until 14 days after the last time they were in contact with you while you were able to spread the infection. The team will not share your name or personal information. This information is confidential and will remain private. However, if you are comfortable, please share this information with everyone in your household and any of your close contacts. If the COVID-19 Community Team does not get in contact with you, please call your local health department.

Information that applies to anyone who is advised to stay home because of COVID-19

- Stay home except to seek medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas.
- Do not use public transportation, ride shares, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from others in your home, especially people who are at higher risk of serious illness.
- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- Do not prepare or serve food to others.
- Do not allow visitors into your home.

> If you cannot meet these requirements where you currently live, the COVID-19 Community Team can help to connect you to resources that can help.
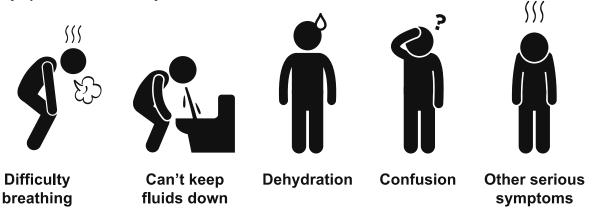
PREVENT THE SPREAD:

- Wear a cloth face covering or mask over your nose and mouth if you are in a room with others. If you are unable to wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth or mask, others should wear a cloth face covering over their nose and mouth or mask if they share or enter the room.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sneeze into your sleeve -- not into your hands -- then throw away the tissue into a lined trashcan and immediately wash hands.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds -- especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose, or after going to the bathroom. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum content of 60% alcohol can be used instead of soap and water if your hands are not visibly dirty.
- Do not share household items such as dishes, cups, utensils, towels, bedding with other people. After using these items, wash them thoroughly with soap and water. Laundry may be washed in a standard washing machine with warm water and detergent; bleach may be added but is not necessary.
- Clean and disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces daily (including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, faucets, toilets, phones, tv remotes, keys, keyboards), and especially any surfaces that may have body fluids on them. Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes, according to the product label instructions. More info: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html

PRACTICE HOME CARE:

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids. You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®) to reduce fever and pain.
    - Do not give children younger than age 2 years any medications without first checking with a doctor.
    - Note that medicines do not "cure" COVID-19 and do not stop you from spreading the virus.
- Seek medical care if your symptoms get worse, especially if you are at a higher risk of serious illness.
- **Symptoms that indicate you should seek medical care include**:

| **Difficulty breathing** | **Can't keep fluids down** | **Dehydration** | **Confusion** | **Other serious symptoms** |

- If possible, call ahead <u>before</u> going to your doctor's office or hospital to tell them you are isolating for COVID-19. This will help the health care personnel prepare for your arrival and protect others from getting infected.
    - <u>Do not</u> wait in any waiting rooms and <u>do</u> wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth or mask at all times if possible.
    - Do not use public transportation.
    - If you call 911, first notify the dispatch and paramedics that you are under isolation for COVID-19.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important public health matter.