

## When to Test for COVID-19

### **At what point after potential exposure should a person get tested for COVID-19?**

In many cases, people are getting tested too early after exposure to be helpful, and rapid COVID-19 tests may be negative even if the person is infected. In cases where there is potential exposure from close contact, whether or not the person tests negative, the person should self-isolate for fourteen days. Those who develop COVID-19 symptoms are most infectious two days before to one day after symptom onset, and symptoms usually occur around four to five days after exposure (may occur up to 11-12 days). This indicates that day 4 or 5 after potential exposure could be the optimal time for testing.

This answer is based on the CDC and published data:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-guidance-management-patients.html>.

### Incubation period

The incubation period for COVID-19 is thought to extend to 14 days, with a median time of 4-5 days from exposure to symptoms onset. One study reported that 97.5% of people with COVID-19 who have symptoms will do so within 11.5 days of SARS-CoV-2 infection.

### [Temporal dynamics in viral shedding and transmissibility of COVID-19.](#)

He X, Lau EHY, Wu P, Deng X, Wang J, Hao X, Lau YC, Wong JY, Guan Y, Tan X, Mo X, Chen Y, Liao B, Chen W, Hu F, Zhang Q, Zhong M, Wu Y, Zhao L, Zhang F, Cowling BJ, Li F, Leung GM. Nat Med. 2020 May;26(5):672-675. doi: 10.1038/s41591-020-0869-5. Epub 2020 Apr 15. PMID: 32296168

“infectiousness was shown to peak at 2 days before to 1 day after symptom onset, and the proportion of presymptomatic transmission ranged from 37% to 48%.”

—Dr. George Moxley, Back to In-Person Worship Work Group