



## ELBERT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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### I have tested for COVID-19 – Now what?

Thank you for taking the time to test for COVID-19 either at a community test site or at home. This packet contains what you should do if you are waiting for your test result, or if your test result is positive.

#### Contents:

- If you're negative/If you're positive
- Isolation Requirements
- Quarantine Requirements
- Home Testing 101
- Frequently Asked Questions

You should be contacted by a member of Elbert County Public Health to help guide you through the next steps. It is important to report a good cell phone number on your testing paperwork. If you do not hear from a member of the public health team, please continue to follow the included instructions. This information can also be found on the [Elbert County Public Health webpage](#).

We appreciate your personal accountability and responsibility in helping us keep our community safe!

Sincerely,

Dwayne Smith, Director  
Elbert County Public Health

**If your test results are negative:**

- If you still have symptoms of another illness, please try to stay away from others until you are feeling better.
- If your symptoms do not improve or get worse, consider testing for COVID again. Sometimes COVID-19 tests do not detect COVID, either because the viral load was low at the time of test, or the test simply was not accurate.
- If you have symptoms and close contact with a confirmed COVID case, you may wish to repeat the test, as a positive result may qualify you for [monoclonal antibody treatment](#) if within 10 days of symptom onset.

**If your test results are positive:**

- Follow isolation instructions presented in the Isolation Order in this packet.
- Contact all your close contacts with quarantine instructions from the Quarantine Order in this packet
- Read the FAQ if you have other questions
- Call ECPH at 303-621-3144 if these instructions are insufficient
- If the positive case is a child, please make sure your school or childcare center is aware.

## **COVID-19 Social Isolation Order**

Elbert County Public Health (ECPH) has determined that you have 2019 Novel Coronavirus disease, referred to in this document as "COVID-19." ECPH recommends that you follow the requirements listed below until it is determined that you are no longer potentially infectious.

**Effective immediately**, to protect the public's health and to prevent the further spread of the disease, you should comply with all listed requirements below:

- **You shall remain at your residence unless it is determined that there is another appropriate isolation location for you. You shall remain isolated until you meet the criteria to be released from isolation, which are listed below.**
- **You shall cooperate with health care professionals in the administration of necessary infection control measures, including those attached to this letter.**
- **You must follow these isolation guidelines whether you are vaccinated or unvaccinated**

Your length of isolation depends on if you are symptomatic or asymptomatic.

- If symptomatic:
  - At least 10 days\* have passed since symptom onset **AND**
  - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
  - Other symptoms have improved.

\* A limited number of persons with severe illness may need to isolate for up to 20 days after symptom onset. If you do not meet the criteria above by day 10, please contact Elbert County Public Health.
- If asymptomatic with a positive test:
  - At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming you have not developed symptoms since your positive test.
  - If symptoms have developed, refer to the symptomatic criteria above.

You are not required to have a negative test to return to work, school, or other activities. The CDC recommends ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using the symptom-based approach listed above. If you have any questions about isolation, please contact Elbert County Public Health at (303) 621-3144.

Dwayne Smith, Director  
Elbert County Public Health

## Instructions for Home Isolation

### While in Home Isolation:

- **Stay home except to get medical care.** If you need to see a doctor, call before you go and tell them that you are positive for COVID-19. If it's a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 and tell them you have COVID-19.
- **Stay separate from other people and pets in your home.** If possible, stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom. Anyone whom you have close contact with during your isolation period, will be required to restart their quarantine period on the day of their last exposure to you. For more information about this quarantine start and end times, please refer to [CDC guidance](#).
- **Wear a facemask.** If you can't stay in a separate room, always wear a facemask when you are around other people.
- **Wash your hands often.** Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.** Throw the tissue away immediately and wash your hands.
- **Avoid sharing household items like dishes, glasses, towels, and bedding.** Wash items with soap and water after use.
- **Clean surfaces like countertops, tabletops, doorknobs, phones, tablets, and bathrooms daily.** Use household cleaners according to the instructions on the label. Wear gloves while cleaning and wash hands afterwards.
- **Encourage your close contacts to get tested, especially if symptomatic.** Tests are most accurate around seven days after exposure to a positive case. A close contact is defined as having direct contact or being within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more.

### When to seek medical care

Most people with COVID-19 have mild illness and recover within a few weeks. If you feel like your illness is getting worse, call your doctor. Signs of getting worse may include having a hard time breathing, feeling short of breath, or being unable to keep down liquids.

## COVID-19 Quarantine Order

You are receiving this letter because you have been in close contact with someone infected with the 2019 Novel Coronavirus disease, referred to in this document as "COVID-19." ECPH recommends that you follow the Quarantine Order guidelines listed below:

**If you are vaccinated, quarantine is not required. However, we ask that you:**

- Monitor symptoms for 14 days per guidelines below.
- Wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until you receive a negative test result.
- Test 5-7 days after exposure of positive contact.
- Isolate and get tested as soon as possible if you develop symptoms.

**If you are unvaccinated, quarantine is required for 7-14 days. Your quarantine period starts on the day after your last contact with the positive case. Quarantining means:**

- Restrict activities outside your home. Don't go to work, school, or public areas.
- Avoid using public transportation, rideshares or taxis.
- Clean your hands often and cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid sharing personal household items with others in your home.
- Clean high-touch, shared surfaces in your home after use.
- More instructions can be found at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/how-to-quarantine> .

ECPH requires that **unvaccinated individuals** follow the Quarantine Order guidelines listed below:

- Monitor yourself daily for symptoms. Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days after exposure, must isolate and contact Public Health. If necessary, seek medical care and testing for COVID-19, calling your doctor before you show up.
- Quarantine may end after 10 days if the close contact has no symptoms. Continue to monitor symptoms and wear a mask in public indoor settings through Day 14.
- Quarantine may end after 7 days (and no earlier) if the close contact has no symptoms and has tested negative on day 5 or later. Continue to monitor symptoms and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days.
- 14-day quarantine remains the gold standard. People who live in congregate or residential care facilities (long-term care facilities, prisons, homeless shelters, etc.) are expected to fulfill the full 14-day quarantine.

*Review the graphics at the very end of this document for a visual explanation.*

**If you're a close contact - when should I get tested?**

- Symptomatic - test right away.

- Asymptomatic and vaccinated - test at day 5 -7.
- Asymptomatic and unvaccinated - test day 5 or later, fulfill quarantine through at least day 7.

Elbert County Public Health offers free BinaxNOW COVID-19 antigen testing Monday through Thursday, providing results in approximately 15 minutes. To make an online appointment, please visit our [registration page](#). Free PCR testing is available every Thursday 10:00 am – 3:00 pm in the Exhibit Building at the Elbert County Fairgrounds in Kiowa. No appointment is required, and results are typically provided within 24 hours.

We know quarantine is very challenging. The goal of quarantine is to keep someone *who came into contact with COVID-19 and might become infected* away from others to prevent the spread of the virus. People who have COVID-19 are contagious 48 hours before they start showing symptoms. Without quarantine it would be easy for someone to spread COVID, even before they knew they were sick. While remaining in one location is preferred, if there are activities that will make your quarantine experience more manageable while having NO CONTACT with other people, such as independent work or exercise, they are permissible by ECPH.

Your close contacts and family members (who are considered secondary contacts) can continue going to work and school unless you become sick and test positive. If you become symptomatic, or test positive, everyone who is unvaccinated that you had close contact with during the 48-hour period before symptoms started (or before you took your positive COVID test if asymptomatic), will have to quarantine for 7-10 days from their last close contact with you.

If you have further questions, please contact Elbert County Public Health at 303-621-3144.

Sincerely,

Dwayne Smith, Director  
Elbert County Public Health

| Sunday                                | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday             | Thursday                                | Friday                | Saturday                              |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 29                                    | 30<br>Exposed to positive COVID-19 case               | 1<br>Quarantine Day 1                                 | 2<br>Quarantine Day 2 | 3<br>Quarantine Day 3                   | 4<br>Quarantine Day 4 | 5<br>Quarantine Day 5<br><br>May test |
| 6<br>Quarantine Day 6<br><br>May test | 7<br>Quarantine Day 7<br><br>May test                 | 8<br>If negative test On Day 5- 7, Quarantine lifted* | 9                     | 10<br>If not tested, Quarantine lifted* | 11                    | 12                                    |
| 13                                    | 14<br>Continue to monitor for symptoms through Day 14 | 15  | 16                    | 17                                      | 18                    | 19                                    |

\* Quarantine may be lifted, only when a person has remained symptom-free the entire quarantine period.

## HOME TESTING 101

**If you test positive via a home test, please visit <https://covidbinax.colorado.gov/> to report your positive test.**

- You'll need to make an account then enter the information of the positive test.
- Once you do that, Elbert County Public Health will automatically be notified of this positive test.
- **Follow isolation instructions presented in this packet.**
- **Notify your close contacts with quarantine instructions, presented in this packet.**
- Notify your employer, church, and/or school about your positive test.

ECPH supports the use of home COVID-19 tests in most situations. Here's what you need to know about home testing:

- At home tests are typically rapid antigen tests. You can find them at many stores, or you can order online.
- This type of test is most accurate if you have symptoms.
- They can also be used to check yourself before going to school, an event, etc. - though they may produce a false negative (meaning you could have COVID, but the test isn't sensitive enough to pick it up).

Your employer or school may not accept a negative home test to end quarantine early or return to work. Please check with your employer or school about their policies.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Isolation

#### **I just tested positive. How long is my isolation?**

If symptomatic, stay isolated until after

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **AND**
- At least 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms have improved

If asymptomatic (no symptoms, just a positive test), stay isolated until after

- At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test

**What if I'm positive but I've had symptoms for weeks? Is my isolation already over?** That's a hard question to answer. If you've tested positive but it's hard to pinpoint when your symptoms started, please contact ECPH at 303-621-3144. A nurse or contact tracer can help you determine your isolation period.

#### **Is it possible to isolate when I live in a household with others?**

Yes, it is possible. If you are truly able to stay away from others in your house, you may isolate in the same house as your family. This could mean staying in a separate room or area of the house, utilizing the kitchen and bathroom when nobody is around and disinfecting after use, and wearing a mask whenever moving around rooms where others might be after you. If possible, it's best to isolate completely away from your family.

#### **What if I don't meet the requirements to end isolation after 10 days? Can isolation last longer?**

A limited number of persons with severe illness may need to isolate for up to 20 days after symptom onset. If you do not meet the criteria above by day 10, please contact Elbert County Public Health.

#### **Do I need a negative test to return to work or school?**

No. Once you've met the criteria to end isolation you are clear to return to work or school. You can test positive for up to 3 months after your initial COVID-19 diagnosis. We do not recommend testing for 90 days after having COVID.

## **Quarantine**

### **What makes someone a close contact?**

A close contact is someone who is within 6 feet of a positive case, for 15 minutes or more cumulatively. You may also be a close contact if you had a briefer, but more physical, interaction such as kissing, sharing silverware, etc.

### **What does a vaccinated close contact need to do?**

If you are a vaccinated close contact, you do not need to quarantine. You need to watch for symptoms, get tested on day 5-7, and wear a mask in indoor public places for 14 days or until you receive your negative test results.

If you develop symptoms, test right away, regardless of vaccination status.

### **What does an unvaccinated close contact need to do?**

If you are an unvaccinated close contact, you should quarantine for 7-10 days from your last exposure to the positive case. So, if you spent time with the positive case on Friday, day 1 of quarantine is Saturday. You may PCR test on day 5-7 after exposure and be released from quarantine after day 7 is complete. If you do not test, you should complete 10 full days of quarantine.

If you develop symptoms, test right away.

***If you come into close contact again with any positive case, your quarantine starts all over.***

### **What if a close contact already had COVID?**

If you had COVID in the last 90 days, you do not need to quarantine. If it's been longer than 90 days and you're unvaccinated, you need to quarantine.

### **What if I'm positive and I live in a family with both vaccinated and unvaccinated people?**

These situations are complicated. Here are the main things you need to know:

1. Your unvaccinated family member's quarantine begins on their last day of contact with you, the positive case. If you are able to FULLY isolate away from your family (such as in another house, or a separate room), their quarantine can start after their last contact with you. If you cannot isolate away from your unvaccinated family members, their quarantine starts after your isolation is over (after day 10). If the positive case is unable to isolate away from the unvaccinated family members, they will be out of school/work for 17 days (10 days of your positive isolation + 7 days of their quarantine), if they test negative, if they have tested positive isolation period is for 20 days. (10 days of your positive isolation + 10 days of their own

isolation time).

2. Your vaccinated family members do not need to quarantine away from you, although because breakthrough cases are possible you should try to stay away from one another as much as possible.

## **Understanding your testing options**

### **When should I get tested?**

You should always test if you have COVID-19 symptoms. If you have had close contact with a known COVID infection whether you are vaccinated or not it is best to test on day 5-7 after exposure unless you develop symptoms, then test immediately.

### **Which test should I use?**

If you are asymptomatic, a PCR test is recommended. If you are symptomatic a rapid antigen or a rapid molecular test is recommended. If there is a high suspicion you have COVID and you have a negative rapid test, you should also get a follow up PCR test to confirm you are actually negative.

### **I'm a close contact and I tested negative. Am I good to go or should I test again?**

If you are unvaccinated, you **MUST** complete 10 full days of quarantine, even if you test negative. If you are vaccinated and you test negative on day 5-7 you can lift your quarantine at day 7. However, it's always possible that the test was a false negative or that you'll get symptoms after the negative test, so please continue to monitor yourself closely for 14 days.

### **I have symptoms but have tested negative. Is it definitely not COVID?**

Not necessarily. COVID tests are not perfect, and they work best when the viral load is high. If you tested negative with a rapid test, but think it may be COVID, you should get a PCR test, if one is not available, consider repeating the antigen test in 24 to 48 hours.

### **I had COVID already. Should I test again?**

We do not recommend retesting within 90 days of a confirmed COVID infection as it may still produce a positive result from the initial infection. If you are required to test for school/work/travel, please contact that organization for further guidance within the 90-day period. If you become symptomatic after 90 days or have close contact with a person who has COVID-19, then yes you should test again.