

Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who are sick or have been exposed to people who are sick. **Isolation or self-isolation applies to people who:**

- Have a positive COVID-19 test.
- Have symptoms of COVID-19 (coughing, shortness of breath and/or fever).
- Are getting ill and think they **might** have COVID-19. Symptoms, especially early on, may be mild and feel like a common cold. Symptoms could include a combination of cough, body aches, fatigue, and chest tightness. Some people may not develop fever or fever may not appear until several days into the illness.

Quarantine or self-quarantine applies to:

- People who are close contacts of a person who either has a positive test or symptoms -- even early symptoms -- of illness.

Generally, as long as the site is suitable, a person's residence is the preferred setting for quarantine and isolation, according to the CDC.

The difference between isolation and quarantine

ISOLATION AND SELF-ISOLATION

- Separate sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
- Are for people who are already sick.
- Can be voluntary, but public health agencies have legal authority to issue isolation orders to people who are sick.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 **OR** if you develop symptoms of COVID-19, including early or mild symptoms (see above), you should be in isolation (stay away from others) until:
 - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
AND
 - other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved)
AND
 - At least **7 days** have passed since your symptoms first appeared
 - CDC: What to do if you are in isolation:
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

- Health care workers may have to isolate for longer and should do what they are told by the health care facility they work for.

QUARANTINE AND SELF-QUARANTINE

- Separate people and restricts their movement if they were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. This could include exposure to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or a person with the symptoms of COVID-19.
- Are for people who are not sick, but who may have been exposed to (in close contact with) someone who is sick. This could include members of your household, co-workers, or others you spend a great deal of time with (and are within six feet of for 10 minutes or more).
- Can be voluntary, but public health has legal authority to issue quarantine orders to people who were exposed to a contagious disease.
- Quarantined people:
 - Stay at home or in another location **for 14 days** so they don't spread the disease to healthy people.
 - Can seek medical treatment from a health care provider. In the case of COVID-19, they should **CALL** a provider or clinic first to get instructions **BEFORE** going to a health care office, hospital, or urgent care. If they have a medical emergency, they should tell the 911 dispatcher they are under quarantine for COVID-19.

Enforcement of ordered isolation and quarantine

- State and local public health agencies request that Coloradans and visitors from other states or countries voluntarily cooperate with isolation and quarantine instructions.
- State or local public health agencies may issue isolation and quarantine orders in some high-risk situations or if non-compliance is anticipated.
- If people do not follow the orders, public health agencies can involve law enforcement.
- If enforcement were to become necessary, the entity that issued the order (the state or local public health agency) could file an enforcement action in state district court asking a judge to enforce the order. The court could also levy fines but, on the whole, public health is more interested in compliance with the terms of the order.
- Public health agencies are working hard to make sure the needs of people in isolation/quarantine are being met to help ensure compliance.

LEGAL AUTHORITY IN COLORADO

- [25-1-506: Powers and duties of county and district health departments \(Colorado Revised Statutes\)](#).
- [25-1.5-102: Epidemic and communicable diseases – powers and duties of the department \(Colorado Revised Statutes\)](#).