

# COVID-19 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## COVID EXPOSURE AND SYMPTOMS

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Q: How is COVID spread?

A: Typically by droplets (coughing, sneezing, singing, etc). Certain procedures may make COVID aerosolized (spread through the air).

Q: How many possible symptoms of COVID do I have to have in order to test positive? (Possible symptoms of COVID are listed by the CDC as fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea.)

A: You could have all, one or two or none of the listed COVID symptoms and still test positive.

Q: What is a true fever?

A: For those not working in healthcare, a fever is defined as a temperature  $\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$ . For healthcare workers, a fever is defined as a temperature  $\geq 100.0^{\circ}\text{F}$ .

## TESTING

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Q: How and where do I get tested?

A: For details on how to arrange getting tested at Salem Clinic see our web page under resources and COVID 19 Guidelines. You could also type into the search field on the web “find a COVID test site near me” if you are unable to get tested at Salem Clinic.

Q: How soon after I develop COVID-like symptoms or after an exposure should I get tested?

A: You can be tested at the onset of COVID-19 symptoms. However, the reliability of the result is improved after at least 24 hours from symptom onset.

If you have an exposure to a person with confirmed COVID-19, it is best to wait for 72 hours from the time of exposure to be tested unless you develop symptoms.

Q: How long does it take to get results back?

A: Depending on the type of test done, it may take 1-5 days to get the results back.

Q: Why did I test negative when family members are positive and we have the same symptoms? Should I get re-tested?

A: There could be multiple reasons for this. Your family member could have had a false positive or you could have tested too soon, and have a false negative result. It is not really necessary for you to test again unless your symptoms do not improve or worsen. If symptomatic, follow home care advice. You will need to quarantine and treat yourself as if you tested positive.

- Q: If I am indirectly exposed (examples: husband's boss was positive, child exposed at daycare) should I be tested?
- A: Not unless you are symptomatic, but it is your choice.
- Q: Do I need to get tested after I have travelled/vacationed if I have no known exposure or symptoms?
- A: Not typically unless you are being required to (by your employer for example).
- Q: What if I want to get tested to see if I have possibly had COVID in the past (Antibody testing)?
- A: You would need to contact your primary care provider who will decide whether to order the antibody test for you. You should also check with your insurance carrier to see if this testing is a covered benefit.

## TESTING POSITIVE FOR COVID OR KNOWN EXPOSURE

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- Q: How do I treat my symptoms?
- A: You can treat your symptoms as you would any other virus (for example the flu or a cold). If your symptoms worsen to the point that they cannot be managed by you at home, call your healthcare provider for advice. If you have emergent symptoms such as difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in your chest, new confusion, an inability to waken or to stay awake or an unusual color to your skin, lips or nail beds such as very pale, gray or blue you should seek medical care immediately.
- Q: Do I need to get re-tested after a positive test?
- A: No, as your test result may continue to be positive even after completing the necessary quarantine.
- Q: What is the length of time that I need to quarantine after I test positive for COVID?
- A: 5 days from your onset of symptoms or positive test date (if you have no symptoms). Wear a well fitting mask for an additional 5 days following your isolation period. If you are not seeing any improvement in your symptoms and/or still have a fever, you should isolate for 10 days.
- Q: If I have a high risk exposure to someone with COVID, do I need to Quarantine? A high risk exposure is considered to be within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed COVID, without masks and for a length of time 15 minutes or greater.
- A: Unvaccinated or 6 months past your 2<sup>nd</sup> Pfizer or Moderna Vaccine or 2 months since your first J & J vaccine: Quarantine for 5 days followed by 5 days of strict face mask use.
- Vaccinated persons with a booster: No need to quarantine if you remain symptom free.
- Q: Can I get COVID more than once?
- A: This is still unknown but believed to be possible after 90 days. Re-infection is not common in the first 90 days.