I Have Tested for COVID-19 – Now What?

Thank you for taking the time to test for COVID-19 either at a proctored 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:

Depending on the number of cases in the community, you might not always be contacted by Gunnison County Health and Human Services. It is important to report a good phone number (preferably a cellphone if available), as well as an e-mail address, on your testing paperwork. If you do not hear from a member of the public health team, please continue to follow the included instructions and call DHHS at 970-641-3244. This information can also be found at: https://covid19.gunnisoncounty.org/

We appreciate your personal accountability and responsibility in helping us end the pandemic!

Sincerely,

Gunnison County Health and Human Services

If You are Negative

- And you still have symptoms of another illness
    - Please try to stay away from others until your symptoms are better.
- And your symptoms change 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.

If You are Positive

- Follow isolation instructions presented on page 3 of this packet.
- Contact all your close contacts with quarantine instructions from page 4 of this packet.
- If you have other questions, read the FAQ on page 6 of this packet.
- Call DHHS at 970-641-3244 if you have further questions.
- If the positive case is a child, please make sure your school nurse knows.

COVID-19 SOCIAL ISOLATION INSTRUCTIONS

If you have a positive COVID-19 test, or have symptoms of COVID-19, you should isolate. Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Gunnison County Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) request that you **remain at your residence or another appropriate isolation location until you meet the criteria to be released from isolation**, which are listed below.

Determining Your Isolation Period
- If symptomatic you should be in isolation until:
    - At least 5 days have passed since symptom onset **AND**
        - Your symptoms have resolved
        - At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medication **AND**
        - Other symptoms have improved*.
        *People with severe illness or who are immunocompromised may require a longer period of isolation. If you do not meet the criteria above by day 5, please contact DHHS.
- If asymptomatic with a positive test, you should be in isolation until:
    - At least 5 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming you have not developed symptoms since your first positive test.
    - After 5 days of isolation and with no symptoms, you may leave isolation.
        - You NEED to wear a mask in public for 5 more days
    - If symptoms have developed, refer to the symptomatic criteria above.
- You cannot travel by plane while sick or in isolation
    - CDC discourages travel by plane until 10 days after symptom onset
- You are not required to have a negative test to return to work, school, or other activities. The CDC recommends ending isolation and precautions using this symptom-based strategy.

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 you are positive for COVID-19. If it is 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 need to restart their quarantine period on the day of their last exposure to you.
- **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 effective approximately 5 days after exposure to a positive case.

When to Seek Medical Care
- People with mild illness may be able to isolate and recover at home without seeing a medical provider. If your symptoms worsen (e.g. difficulty breathing) or if you are in a higher risk group because you are older than 60 or have a chronic illness, call your PCP or go to Urgent Care or the ER.

COVID-19 QUARANTINE INSTRUCTIONS

Quarantining prevents the ongoing spread of the virus to other people by individuals who have been exposed or are likely to have been exposed, but do not yet know if they have been infected. The new quarantine guidelines are based on your vaccination status and how recently you were vaccinated.

If you have had a booster shot, or were vaccinated within the last 6 months, quarantine is not required. We do ask that you:
- Wear a mask in public indoor settings for 10 days or until you receive a negative test result.
- Test 5 days after exposure of positive contact.
- Monitor for any sign of symptoms for 14 days.
- <u>Isolate and get tested as soon as possible if you develop symptoms.</u>

If you are unvaccinated, or your vaccination was MORE THAN SIX MONTHS AGO, quarantine is required for 5 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 school or public areas.
- 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.
- Monitor yourself daily for symptoms. Anyone who develops symptoms within 14 days after exposure must isolate, contact DHHS, and get tested.
- Anyone who is in quarantine is encouraged to test on Day 5 if possible.
- Quarantine may end after 5 days if you have no symptoms.
- Continue monitoring for symptoms and wear a mask in public through Day 10.
- *14-Day quarantine remains the gold standard. People who live in congregate or residential care facilities are expected to fulfill the full 14-Day quarantine.*

An example quarantine calendar can be found below

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
29	**30** Exposed to positive COVID-19 case	**1** Quarantine Day 1	**2** Quarantine Day 2	**3** Quarantine Day 3	**4** Quarantine Day 4	**5** Quarantine Day 5 Get tested
6 Quarantine Day 6 May test	**7** Quarantine Day 7 May test	**8** If negative test on Day 5-7, Quarantine lifted*	**9**	**10** Continue to wear a mask until Day 10	**11**	**12**
13	**14** 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

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 48hrs before they start showing symptoms; so, without quarantine, it would be easy for someone to spread COVID even before they knew they were sick. 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 have close contact with during the 48-hr period before symptoms started (or before you took your positive COVID test if asymptomatic), will have to quarantine for 5 days from their last contact with you.

COVID-19 TESTING GUIDANCE

If you're a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case – when to test?
- Symptomatic – test right away
- Asymptomatic and boosted or vaccinated LESS THAN 6 months ago – test at day 5
- Asymptomatic, vaccinated MORE THAN 6 months ago, or unvaccinated – test day 5 and fulfill quarantine through at least Day 5

Free Molecular PCR Testing
Gunnison County and Gunnison Valley Health continue to partner in providing free COVID-19 testing to the community. You can schedule your own testing appointment online at my.primary.health/L/gvh. These are PCR send-out tests, with an expected processing time of 72 hrs.

Home Testing
At-home tests are typically rapid antigen tests. You can find them at many stores or you can order online. A popular brand-name is BinaxNOW. They are most accurate if you have symptoms and can also be used to check yourself before going to school, an event, or gathering. Positive results are very accurate, however false negatives regularly happen. Negative tests should be confirmed with a molecular test.

If you test positive via a home antigen test:
- Please contact DHHS to report your positive test, 970-641-3244. Alternately, you can report your test at the following site https://covidbinax.colorado.gov. You will need to make an account and then enter the information of the positive test.
- Follow isolation instructions presented in this packet.
- Contact your close contacts with quarantine instructions presented in this packet.
- Contact your employer or school about your positive test.

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 quarantine policies.

Insurance-Billed or Pay Testing Options
- Peak Family Medicine & Urgent Care, Gunnison
  - Rapid PCR Testing
  - Call 970-641-5055 for an appointment
- Clark's Market Pharmacy, Crested Butte
  - Send-out PCR Testing
  - Call 970-349-6492 for an appointment
- Sopris Health Clinic
  - Rapid Antigen and PCR Testing
  - Call 970-355-9686 or visit https://www.fusion-iv.com for an appointment

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ISOLATION

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 DHHS at 970-641-7663. A nurse or health educator 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 there after you. If possible, it is best to isolate completely away from your family.

What if I don't meet the requirements to end isolation after 5 days? Should 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 to end isolation by day 10, please contact DHHS.

Do I need a negative test to return to work or school?
No. Once you have 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. Your isolation letter proves the dates when you may return to work or school.

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 or glassware, etc.

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?
- Your unvaccinated family members' quarantine begins on their last day of contact with you. If you are able to FULLY isolate from your family (i.e. in another house, or a separate room), their quarantine can begin after their last contact with you. If isolation is not possible, they should quarantine for five days after the end of your isolation period (10 days total).
- Your vaccinated family members should follow quarantine procedures above depending on when they were vaccinated. If they are unable to quarantine they must wear a mask when interacting with other for the next 10 days.

I have symptoms but have tested negative. Is it definitely not COVID?
Not necessarily, COVID tests 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 you tested negative but your symptoms are getting worse, test again in a few days.