After your COVID-19 test

What to do while you wait for your test results to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and save lives

City & County of San Francisco

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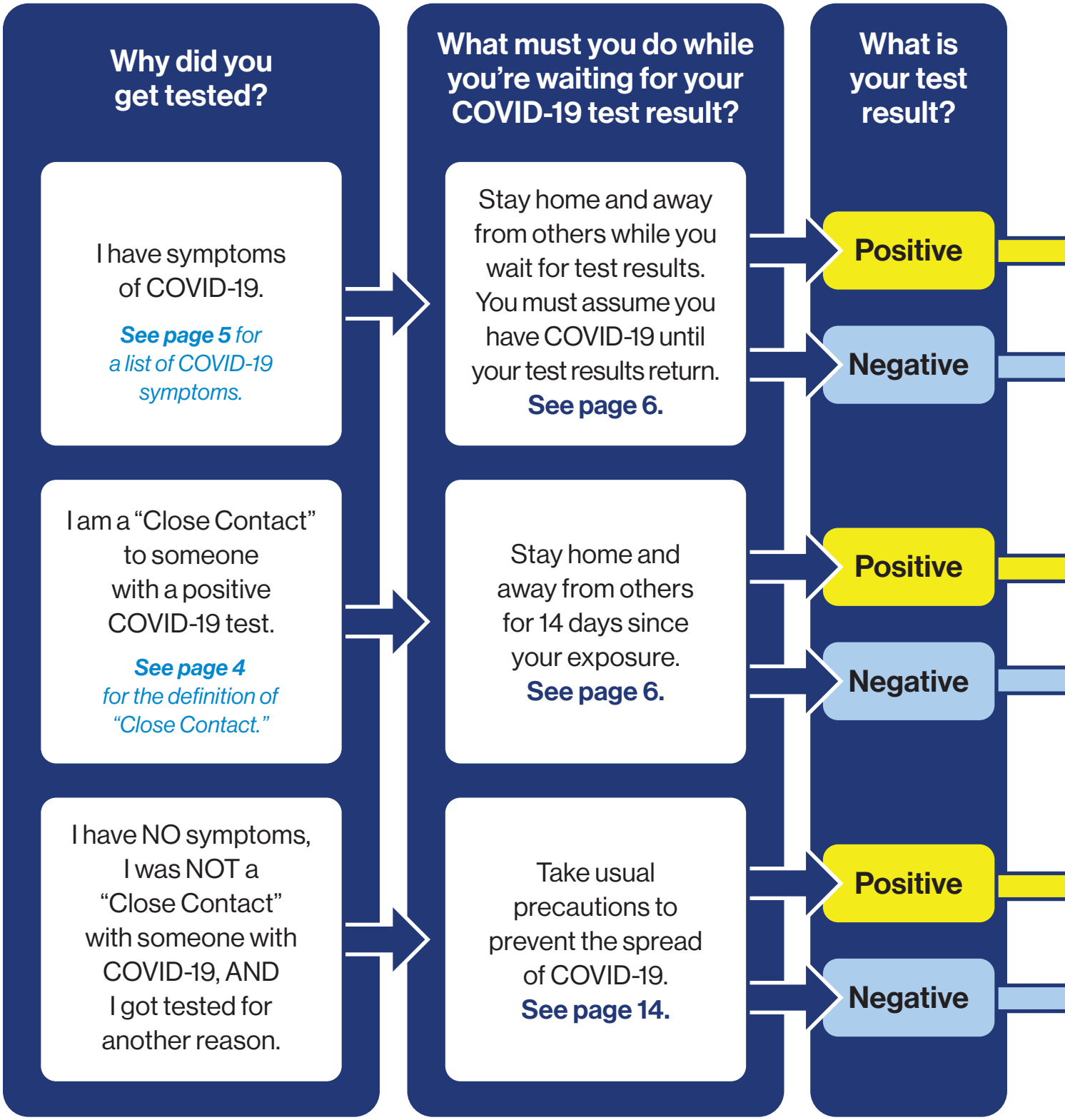
Quick start

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms at any point, see your healthcare provider and get tested. See page 6.



*Staying home and away from others saves lives. Learn what steps to take on **page 6.***

*If you need help to stay home and away from others, help is available! Learn more about food, housing, healthcare, mental health, job protection, and financial resources on **page 15.***

What must you do after you get your COVID-19 test result?

Positive

Stay home and away from others until it has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started AND your symptoms have improved AND it has been at least 24 hours since your fever resolved. **See page 9** for details.

If you never had symptoms you must stay home and away from others for at least 10 days since the date your test was done.

*If you have a positive test, a public health worker will call you. Learn more on **page 10.***

Negative

It can be tricky because the test is not perfect! **See page 11.** If you have questions, **contact your healthcare provider.**

Negative

You still need to stay home and away from others for 14 days. Certain workers may not need to stay home. **See page 12.**

Negative

You do not need to isolate or quarantine. Take usual precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. **See page 14.**

Introduction

This booklet tells you what to do when you're waiting for your COVID-19 virus test results. Check with your doctor's or healthcare provider's office first if you'd like to get tested; in San Francisco healthcare providers MUST test anyone who has a symptom of COVID-19 or is a "Close Contact" of someone with COVID-19. You can also get tested at a CityTestSF location. The booklet helps you answer these questions:

- Do I need to isolate or quarantine (i.e., stay home, do not go to work or school, stay away from others, etc.) after my test?
- How can I protect myself and others while waiting for my COVID-19 test results?
- What am I required to do if I find out I tested positive?
- What does a negative test result mean?
- What am I required to do if I am a "Close Contact" of someone who has COVID-19?
- When can I go back to work, ride the bus, go for a walk outside or go to the grocery store?
- What resources are available to me if I have to stay home and can't work?

You are considered a "Close Contact" if you had any of the following types of contact with someone with COVID-19 within 48 hours BEFORE their symptoms began or while they were feeling ill:

- Lived or stayed overnight with someone with COVID-19
- Had sex with someone with COVID-19
- Took care of or received care from someone with COVID-19
- Were within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more of the person with COVID-19
- Had direct contact with the bodily fluids or secretions (including coughing, sneezing, or sharing a coffee cup) of someone with COVID-19

People may get a COVID-19 test for three main reasons:

(1) You had one or more of the symptoms of COVID-19,

(2) You are a "Close Contact" of someone who tested positive for COVID-19, or

(3) You have NO symptoms of illness, you are NOT a "Close Contact" of someone who has COVID-19, AND you are getting tested for another reason (e.g., you are an essential worker, you are about to get a dental procedure or elective surgery, etc.)

If you have symptoms or are considered a "Close Contact" (#1 or #2 above), you **must** isolate or quarantine (i.e., stay home, do not go to work or school, stay away from others, etc.) while you are waiting for your test result. **See page 6 ("What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?").**

If you do not fall into #1 or #2, you do not need to isolate or quarantine after getting tested; you can simply wait for your test results and continue usual precautions during this pandemic. **See page 14 ("Prevent the spread").**

If your result is positive, **see page 9 ("What if I get a positive COVID-19 test?").**

Symptoms of COVID-19

Any symptom below that is new or not explained by another reason

- Fever (100.4°F / 38.0°C or higher), chills, or repeated shaking/shivering
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing
- Feeling unusually weak or fatigued
- Loss of taste or smell
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Runny or congested nose
- Diarrhea

If you have symptoms that are not on this list but are concerned you may have COVID-19, contact your healthcare provider.

Once you get your results, the length of time that you have to continue to isolate or quarantine at home is different depending on your test result and why you were tested. This booklet helps you understand how long you need to isolate or quarantine to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and save lives.

What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?

These rules apply if:

(1) You had one or more symptoms of COVID-19 (If this is you, get tested! While you wait for results, these rules also apply to you)

(2) Someone you had Close Contact with found out that they tested positive for COVID-19

(3) You tested positive for COVID-19

Do not leave your home unless you are getting healthcare:

- Do not go to work, school or public areas
- Do not take public transportation, ride shares or taxis
- Do not prepare or serve food to others
- Do not allow visitors into your home unless you need their help to take care of yourself
- Limit your contact with pets

If you live with other people:

- Limit contact with others as much as possible
- You and others in your household should wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth at all times at home **(see Appendix A for examples of how to properly wear a face covering)**
- Stay in one room away from others
- Wash your hands frequently
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often (such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, light switches, faucets, toilets, phones, tv remotes, keys, keyboards)

- Keep your own set of utensils, plates, towels, bedding, or other household items. Do not share them
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible. If you share a bathroom:
  - Turn on fans that pull air out of the bathroom
  - Open windows
  - Wear a face covering
  - Flush the toilet with the lid closed
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - Wipe down anything you touched with a disinfectant

Take care of yourself:

- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- You may take an over the counter medicine like acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Motrin® or Advil®) to reduce fever and pain, as long as those medicines are safe for you to take. For children 2 or under, check with your healthcare provider first.
- Note that medicines do not "cure" COVID-19 and do not stop you from spreading the virus.

You can ask friends or loved ones to help:

If people ask if they can help, they can:

- Leave food and drinks at your door
- Get you medicine to relieve symptoms
- Help care for children, parents, other dependents, or your pets

If friends and family come to help, remind them to wear a face covering and wash their hands.

Persons unable to care for themselves don't have to isolate from their caregiver. However, caregivers will need to quarantine for 14 days if your test results come back positive for COVID-19. **See more on page 12 ("If I had Close Contact with someone with COVID-19, how long do I quarantine for?").**

If you cannot meet the requirements for Isolation or Quarantine where you currently live, call 311 to request help with housing, food, or other needs. **See more on page 15 ("Resources").**

Seek medical care if your symptoms get worse:

Symptoms that indicate you should seek medical care include:

Difficulty breathing

Can't keep fluids down

Dehydration

Confusion

and other serious symptoms.

If possible, call ahead before going to your healthcare provider's office or hospital and tell them whether:

- You are having symptoms of COVID-19 and waiting for your test results, OR
- You had Close Contact with someone with COVID-19, OR
- You tested positive for COVID-19.

If you call 911, let them know your situation as well.

This allows health care personnel to prepare for your arrival and protect others from getting infected.

- Do not wait in any waiting room. Wear a face covering or mask at all times if possible.
- Avoid using public transportation to the extent possible.

What if I get a positive COVID-19 test?

If you get a positive test result, you **must** isolate at home while you are contagious. **See page 6 ("What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?").** It is a San Francisco directive that you must isolate while you are contagious (see Directive of the Health Officer No. 2020-03b at www.sfdph.org/directives).

You are considered contagious until **all** of the following are true:

- It has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started*; AND

- Your fever is gone for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicines (e.g., acetaminophen/Tylenol, ibuprofen/Motrin, etc); AND
- Your symptoms have gotten better

Your healthcare provider might ask that you isolate at home longer than 10 days, depending on your health history. Healthcare workers, especially Skilled Nursing Facility workers, may have different rules. See www.sfcdcp.org/rtw.

If you test positive but never had any symptoms, you are still contagious and must isolate at home until 10 days have passed since the date of your positive test.

Tell your "Close Contacts" that you tested positive

Try to remember who you had Close Contact with during the 48 hours before you first noticed symptoms. They must stay home and quarantine for 14 days after they last had Close

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* One of the COVID-19 symptoms that may not improve quickly is loss of taste or smell. You can stop isolating at home even if your sense of taste or smell has not improved as long as it has been 10 days since your symptoms started, your other symptoms have improved, and you have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

Contact with you. They can reference **page 12 ("If I had Close Contact with someone with COVID-19, how long do I quarantine for?").**

A "Close Contact" is anyone who, in the 48 hours before you first had symptoms or while you have symptoms:

- Lived or stayed overnight with you
- Had sex with you
- Took care of you or cared for you
- Was within 6 feet of you for 15 minutes or more
- Had direct contact with your bodily fluids or secretions (including coughing, sneezing, or sharing a coffee cup)

A public health worker will call you

A trained public health worker from the Department of Public Health (DPH) will reach out to you by phone or text from the number (628) 217-6101 or (628) 217-6102. They will check to see how you are doing, make sure you have what you need to isolate at home, and help you identify your "Close Contacts" to prevent the spread of the virus.

DPH does this whenever there is an outbreak of infectious diseases like measles, tuberculosis, and others to protect the community's health.

These trained professionals will keep your personal information private and will never ask for your social security number, financial information, or your immigration status.

For more information, see: covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing/

What if I get a negative COVID-19 test?

Read this page carefully and call your healthcare provider if you're not sure what to do.

A "negative" viral test means you probably do not have COVID-19 infection right now. This is a little tricky, so read carefully:

If you never had any symptoms

- and were **not** a "Close Contact" of someone with COVID-19, then you do not need to isolate or quarantine.
- and were a "Close Contact" of someone who had COVID-19, you still must quarantine and stay home until a total of 14 days have passed since you were in Close Contact with that person.

If you had symptoms, you may be able to end isolation and resume your usual life once your symptoms are better and you have not had a fever for 24 hours. However, there is still a chance you may actually have COVID-19 and could spread the virus despite a negative test result because the COVID-19 virus test is not 100% perfect. Your options are:

(1) **Ask your healthcare provider** to help you decide if you should continue to stay away from others (preferred option), OR

(2) Resume your usual life once your symptoms are better and you have not had fever for 24 hours, OR

(3) Continue to isolate and stay home until it has been at least 10 days since your symptoms started especially if you are concerned about being around people who might get really sick if they got COVID-19 (see www.sfcdcp.org/vulnerable)

If I had Close Contact with someone with COVID-19, how long do I quarantine for?

"Close Contact" has a specific meaning! **See the box on page 4.**

After having Close Contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you must self-quarantine at home for 14 days. It can take up to 14 days to develop COVID-19 and you may infect others during this time. **See page 6 ("What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?").** It is a San Francisco directive that you must quarantine at home after Close Contact (see Directive of the Health Officer No. 2020-02b at www.sfdph.org/directives).

Which groups do NOT have to quarantine?

"Essential COVID-19 Response Workers" are healthcare workers, laboratory personnel handling COVID-19 specimens, morgue workers, first responders, law enforcement, sanitation workers, 911 and 311 operators, emergency management personnel, individuals assigned to work as Disaster Service Workers, and individuals who work in long-term care facilities or homeless shelters.

If you are an "Essential COVID-19 Response Worker," you may be able to continue working immediately after "Close Contact" with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 as long as you are not sick and comply with requirements to wear a mask and any other policies specific to your employer. Try to follow the instructions on **page 6 ("What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?")** while not at work.

If you had Close Contact

- and you do not develop any symptoms, you can end quarantine 14 days **after your last Close Contact** with the person with COVID-19

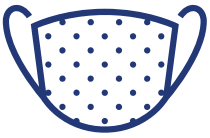
  - If you cannot avoid having Close Contact with the person with COVID-19 while they are sick (for example, you are their caregiver), you must stay in quarantine for 14 full days **after** the day that person completed their self-isolation. (This is likely to be at least 24 total days of home quarantine since your "Close Contact" first had symptoms).

- and you develop symptoms, get tested and follow the instructions on **page 6 ("What are the rules for isolating or quarantining?").**

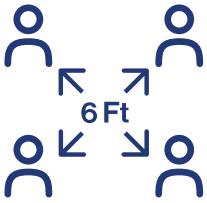
  - If you get a positive COVID-19 virus test: follow the instructions on **page 9 ("What if I get a positive COVID-19 test?").**
  - If you get a negative COVID-19 virus test, discuss this with your healthcare provider. They might still diagnose you with COVID-19 and ask that you follow the instructions on **page 9 ("What if I get a positive COVID-19 test?").** If they tell you they don't think you have COVID-19, you still must stay home and quarantine for 14 days after your last Close Contact with the confirmed COVID-19 case.

Prevent the spread

By getting your COVID-19 test, you have taken an important step to care for yourself, your loved ones, and our community. No matter the results of your test, remember that you can do many things to prevent the spread in the days, weeks, and months ahead:



Wear a face covering that covers your mouth **and** nose whenever you are out of the house.

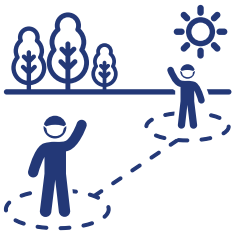


Stay six feet away from people outside your household.

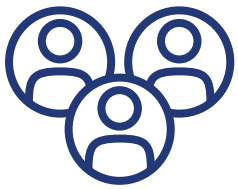
Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

If you don't have soap or water, you can use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Rub the hand sanitizer on all surfaces of your hands until your hands feel dry.

Avoid getting together with people not in your household.



If you must get together with people not in your household, avoid being indoors. Outdoor interactions are much safer. However, you should still stay 6 feet away and wear a face covering during outdoor interactions.



Keep your social circles small and stable.

Resources

Food help

Call 311 anytime, especially if you're having trouble getting or affording food while isolating or quarantining. Visit SF.gov/get-food-resources for more information.

Sign up for monthly CalFresh benefits at (415) 558-4700 or GetCalFresh.org

For older adults and people with disabilities

Call the Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) at 415-355-6700 to get:

- Free restaurant meals through Great Plates Delivered SF
- Home-delivered meals
- Emergency food boxes
- Support with online food delivery services
- Grocery drop-off from volunteers

Housing information

Evictions

You cannot be evicted during the pandemic. You can get more time to pay your rent. However, your rent is not cancelled. You still owe your landlord any missed rent payments.

If you need help paying rent, utilities, or other housing costs, you can apply for Give2SF funds at give2sfhousing.org. You need to earn under a certain amount for your household size.

Rent increases

Rent increases to rent controlled units and City regulated units are on hold temporarily.

See more information on SF.gov/eviction-moratorium

Tenant Counseling Organizations

- Bill Sorro Housing Program (BiSHoP) 415-513-5177 or info@bishopsf.org
- Causa Justa :: Just Cause at 415-487-9203
- Chinatown Community Development Center at 415-984-2730
- Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco at 415-703-8634
- South of Market Community Action Network at 760-913-8913 or tenantcounselor@somcan.org (sfadc.org/landingpage/covid-19-counseling/)
- SF Tenants Union at 415-282-6622 or info@sftu.org
- Tenderloin Housing Clinic CEOP at 415-775-7110 ext. 1702 or allyn@thclinic.org

Help for homeowners

Apply for a loan up to $25,000 for costs like HOA dues and property taxes, at sfmohcd.org/COVID19HELP. You need to make under a certain amount for your household size.

If you have a medical or psychiatric emergency, call 911. Texting 911 is also available.

Medical care resources

If you are uninsured and need medical care, you may call the SF Health Network Call Center at 415-682-1740.

You may also visit SF.gov/information/get-healthcare-during-coronavirus-pandemic for more information.

Mental health resources

Access to mental health and substance use disorder services

For the 24-hour access line, call 888-246-3333
TDD: 888-484-7200

For general information and appointments, call 415-503-4730

Comprehensive Crisis Services

Offers assistance to people in crisis including assessments and crisis interventions.

415-970-3800
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Urgent Care for mental health issues

Westside Crisis
415-355-0311
245 11th Street
Monday to Friday 8 am to 2 pm

Dore Urgent Care
415-553-3100
52 Dore Street
24 hours, 7 days a week

Mental health services for young adults

415-642-4525
Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm

Mental health and substance use services for individuals experiencing homelessness

415-234-3707
Monday to Friday 10 am to 8 pm

Peer-run mental health talk line

855-845-7415
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Financial and work-related help

If you have to isolate or quarantine, you can use Paid Sick Leave or State of California unemployment benefits. Apply for unemployment at edd.ca.gov

During the pandemic, you do not need to have a letter from your healthcare provider to use Paid Sick Leave.

If you don't have sick pay and you test positive for COVID-19, San Francisco can help replace your income up to $1,285, while you stay home, from the Right to Recover Fund. This program will serve up to 1,500 San Franciscans who test positive for COVID-19 to focus on their health and recovery regardless of their immigration status. For more information, visit oewd.org/employees-impacted-covid-19

If you have other concerns related to the impact of isolation and quarantine on your work or finances, visit www.sfcdcp.org/workerFAQ

According to CDC and SF Department of Public Health recommendations, your employer should NOT request a doctor's letter or a negative test to return to work if you had COVID-19. If they request either of these, you can direct them to the Department of Public Health's letter to employers at www.sfcdcp.org/workletter. This letter is also printed on the next page.

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco
London N. Breed
Mayor

Dear San Francisco Employers (not applicable to skilled nursing facilities):

Thank you for all that you are doing in these unprecedented times to help our community stay safe and recover economically. We truly appreciate all your efforts to modify your businesses and everyday lives to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and to save lives. In this vein, we appreciate all your efforts to make sure your employees are well and not at risk of spreading COVID-19 to others at the workplace. This letter reminds you that according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **employees who had COVID-19 are considered no longer contagious and may therefore return to work if it has been at least 10 days since their symptoms started, their symptoms have improved, AND at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.** If the employee never had symptoms and tested positive for the COVID-19 virus, they are considered no longer contagious and can return to work 10 days after their positive test. For more details, please visit www.sfcdcp.org/rtw.

Both the CDC and The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) **discourage employers from requiring a medical note for clearance to return to work after an employee has COVID-19** because of the strain it causes on the healthcare system to produce these notes and the unnecessary hardship it creates for employees. Employees are considered no longer contagious when they meet the criteria described above.

Additionally, according to both the CDC and SFDPH, **employers should not request employees who were diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus provide proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests before allowing employees to return to work**. Requesting employees provide proof of negative COVID-19 virus tests after they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 is unnecessary, delays return to work, and causes strain on testing availability for others who need to be tested. Employees are considered no longer contagious and may return to work when they meet the criteria described above.

Your employee who had COVID-19 may print this letter out to serve the purpose of 1) showing proof that they can return to work as long as they meet the criteria above (detailed further at www.sfcdcp.org/rtw) and/or 2) showing proof that employers should not request proof of a negative COVID-19 virus tests to be allowed to return to work. This letter can be found online at www.sfcdcp.org/workletter

Please refer to the following resources for more details.

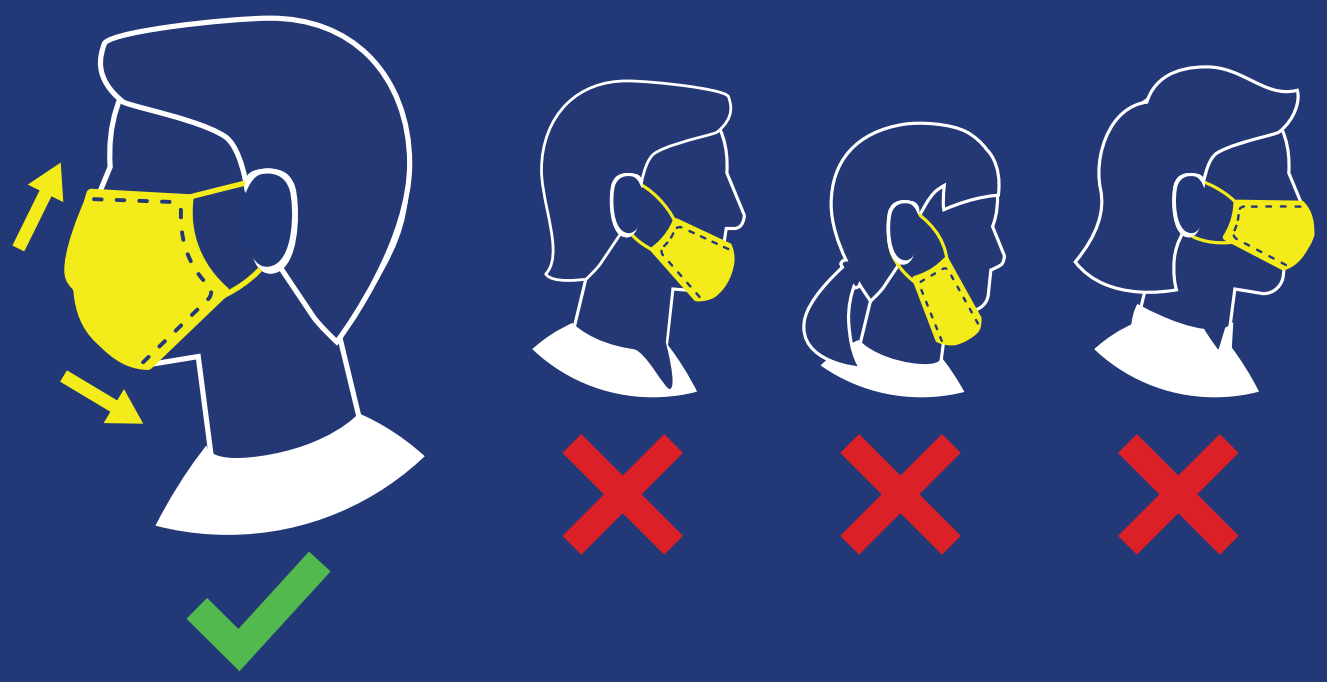
- Ending Isolation or Returning to Work for Those Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19: www.sfcdcp.org/rtw
- What To Do if Someone in the Workplace Has COVID-19: www.sfcdcp.org/covid19-positive-workplace
- General San Francisco-specific information for employers: www.sfcdcp.org/businesses
- General CDC guidance for employers: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

Thank you for all that you do to keep our community healthy,

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco
SFDPH | 101 Grove Street, Room 308, San Francisco, CA 94102

Wear your face covering correctly

Always cover your nose and mouth. Make sure it fits snugly against the sides of your face.



Usa tu cubrebocas correctamente

Siempre cúbrete la nariz y la boca. Asegúrate de que quede bien ajustado a los lados de tu cara.

請正確地佩戴口罩或面部遮蓋物

時刻遮蓋口和鼻。確保口罩或面部遮蓋物緊貼臉部兩側。

Magsuot ng panakip mukha ng tama

Palaging takpan ang iyong ilong at bibig. Siguraduhin na ito ay akmang umaangkop laban sa mga gilid ng iyong mukha.

City & County of San Francisco
sf.gov/FaceCoverings

Masks with valves are not allowed

These kinds of masks do not protect others.

No se permiten los cubrebocas con filtro de válvula

Esos tipos de cubrebocas no protegen a los demás.

禁止使用有閥門的口罩

佩戴此類型口罩不能保護他人。

Hindi maaaring gamitin ang mga maskara na may valve

Walang naidudulot na proteksyon sa ibang tao ang ganitong uri ng maskara.

City & County of San Francisco

sf.gov/FaceCoverings

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