

Close Contact

Close Contact through [proximity and duration of exposure](#): Someone who was less than [6 feet away from an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, *three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes*). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2 starting 2 days before they have any symptoms (or, for asymptomatic people, 2 days before the positive specimen collection date).

- **Exception:** In the **K–12 indoor classroom** setting or a structured outdoor setting where mask use can be observed (i.e., holding class outdoors with educator supervision), the close contact definition excludes students who were between 3 to 6 feet of an infected student (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) if both the infected student and the exposed student(s) [correctly and consistently](#) wore well-fitting [masks](#) the entire time. This exception does not apply to teachers, staff, or other adults in the indoor classroom setting.

Public Health Recommendations:

People who are identified as close contacts should follow [CDC recommendations](#) to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. Recommendations for close contacts to [quarantine](#), get [tested](#), and wear well-fitting [masks](#) after exposure to COVID-19 will vary depending on vaccination status and history of prior COVID-19 diagnosis within the past 90 days. People who have come into close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 should follow the recommendations outlined on the [COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation webpage](#).

Additional Information:

A number of factors can influence a person's [risk of exposure](#) to COVID-19, including the [type, proximity, and duration of their exposure](#), environmental factors (such as [crowding](#) and [ventilation](#)), [vaccination status](#), [COVID-19 infection in the previous 90 days](#), and [mask use](#).

[Correct](#) and consistent mask use is a critical step that people can take to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. In some settings, mask use may be a factor in determining close contact, or in determining recommendations for follow-up after an exposure.