FAQ: POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

Below are some common questions about what to do following a positive test result.
We thought you might like to know our answers.

Q: Are there any treatments to either help or treat COVID-19?

A: No, there is no standard treatment. Once diagnosed with COVID-19, there are only a few treatment options, including resting, drinking plenty of fluids and taking over-the-counter medicines to help with cough, fever, diarrhea and other symptoms. Antibiotics are ineffective because COVID-19 is a viral infection and is not bacterial. Tamiflu is a drug to treat the flu. It will not help you.

There are some trials going on involving different medications, but those are typically being used only in experimental settings for patients with severe COVID-19 symptoms. If you have not been prescribed a medication thus far, it is likely because you do not need one at this time. Follow-up with your primary care physician within the next several days to monitor your health. Visit houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor to find a primary care physician.

If your symptoms become more severe, please contact your primary care physician immediately. Supportive treatments may be given by your doctor or at a hospital. This type of treatment may involve:

- Fluids to reduce the risk of dehydration
- Medication to reduce a fever
- Supplemental oxygen in more severe cases

Do not call or go to the emergency department unless you’re experiencing emergency symptoms described in the question immediately below.

Q: What are the emergency warning signs for COVID-19 for which I should seek medical attention immediately?

A: Emergency warning signs include:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

If you experience any of these symptoms, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel that you have or may have COVID-19. If you decide to go to the emergency room directly yourself, call them before you arrive and let them know you have or may have COVID-19. Wear a surgical face mask and gloves when you go into the ER. Only call your local health department and/or health care provider after you’ve called 911 if you experience any emergency warning signs.

Q: If I have COVID-19, what can I expect during recovery?

A: The COVID-19 recovery process will depend on how mild or severe your case of the illness is.

Mild Symptoms:

- If you experience mild symptoms, you will likely recover in an average of one to two weeks. The recovery process should be like other respiratory viral infections, such as the flu.

Moderate symptoms:

- If you experience moderate symptoms (more acute or alarming symptoms that may warrant a visit to the ER or hospitalization), the recovery process is longer, sometimes taking weeks or, in rare cases, months. In this situation, you would experience prolonged fatigue, cough or shortness of breath.
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**Q:** If I have COVID-19, how long will I be infectious?

**A:** You may still be contagious, even after your fever has subsided and your symptoms are gone. Because of this, even after you’ve recovered, you should continue to wear a face mask or face covering when around others in public or at home (if you live with others). You should continue to disinfect commonly touched surfaces, especially bathroom surfaces. You should also wash your hands with soap often.

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**Q:** If I test positive, I know I should self-quarantine until there has been no fever for 3 days (without any fever-reducing medicine). But what can I do and not do during this quarantine time?

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<th>DO</th>
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| **WORKING** | Rest. If you can work from home, you can do so. Talk with your human resources department or employer. | • Go into work.  
• Come in close contact with other individuals. |
| **HOME** | Stay inside the home. Rely on family members and friends, or apps for ordering groceries and running errands.  
Try to protect your family by staying in one area of the house where the other family members do not have access to you. If possible, avoid sharing the same bedroom and bathroom. Do not use the same utensils (plates, forks, cups, toothbrushes, etc.) or linens. Your family should wear gloves and a face mask near you. They should remain at least six feet away from you. | Leave unless necessary and only do so while wearing a mask and staying 6 feet or more apart from other individuals. |
| **EXERCISE** | Rest. Minimal walking inside your home is fine. Drink plenty of water. | Exercise vigorously. |
| **CLEANING** | • Wipe down hard surfaces, especially common, shared surfaces, with disinfectant. Common surfaces include keyboard, phone, shower knobs, toilet handles, sink surfaces and door knobs.  
• Wash your linens two times a week with a laundry detergent. Use tumble dry and hot settings.  
• Visit bit.ly/disinfecthome for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s tips on keeping your home safe. | Come in close contact with your family. Stay in one area of the house where other family members do not have access to you. |

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**Q:** What happens if I violate the request to self-quarantine or isolate?

**A:** You must obey self-quarantine or isolation orders made by a health agency. People who do not comply could be charged with a misdemeanor or felony, depending on the situation. Some counties in Texas are taking legal action against those who violate the order to self-quarantine or isolate in their homes. We know that you take public health threats seriously and will not violate requests to self-quarantine.
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**Q:** I know you said that I should follow-up with my primary care physician within the next few days. What is my primary care physician looking for?

**A:** If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, you can stop your quarantine if you are cleared by a primary care physician and meet ALL the following criteria:

1. 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.

2. Other symptoms have improved, for example, cough or shortness of breath have improved.

3. At least ten days have passed since their symptoms first appeared, or you have received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart.

**Q:** If I am at risk for COVID-19, is my family at risk?

**A:** Yes. If your family member starts to feel any symptoms (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, diarrhea), contact a primary care physician. He or she may recommend testing. Visit houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor to find a primary care physician. Visit houstonmethodist.org/virtual-health-care to schedule virtual appointments without going on-site to see the doctor.

To limit the risk of COVID-19 in your home, please do the following:

- Avoid contact with your family. Stay in one area of the house where other family members do not have access to you. If possible, do not share bedrooms or bathrooms. Do not share utensils (cups, plates, forks, toothbrushes etc.) or linens. Your family should wear gloves and a face mask near you. They should not be within 6 feet or less of you.


- Wash your linens two times a week with a laundry detergent. Use tumble dry and hot settings.

**Q:** Will I be paid during this self-quarantine?

**A:** Every employer is different. Please talk with your human resources department.

If you have any other questions, please call us at 713.790.3333, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. –6:30 p.m.