

CDC: Test asymptomatic people exposed to SARS-CoV-2

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Editor's note: For the latest news on COVID-19, visit <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2020/01/28/coronavirus>.

Federal officials changed SARS-CoV-2 testing guidance Friday to say asymptomatic people should be tested if they have been in close contact with an infected person.

“Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, it is important that contacts of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection be quickly identified and tested,” [according to updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#).

The change aligns with [AAP interim testing guidance](#) and follows advocacy from the AAP and other medical experts stressing the importance of testing people who have been exposed but are not showing symptoms.

Guidance posted on the CDC website in August had said these individuals may not need testing. At that time, AAP President Sara “Sally” H. Goza, M.D., FAAP, called the advice “a dangerous step backward in our efforts to control this deadly virus.”

“COVID-19 does not recognize political or geographic boundaries. In the absence of robust testing, it can spread invisibly in communities, leading to new spikes in cases that can overwhelm local communities’ ability to care for infected patients,” [she said in a statement](#).

The CDC guidance posted Friday defines close contact with an infected individual as being within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes. While test results are pending, people should [self-quarantine](#) at home and stay

separated from household members as much as possible, according to the CDC. Those who test negative still should self-isolate for 14 days and should keep in mind a future test could be positive.

[AAP interim testing guidance](#) also addresses types of tests, testing in pediatric offices, personal protective equipment and interpreting results.

Resources

- [Information from the CDC about COVID-19 for health care professionals](#)
- [Information about COVID-19 from the AAP Red Book](#)
- [Information about COVID-19 from the AAP](#)
- [Information for parents from HealthyChildren.org on coronavirus](#)

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