



IF YOU THINK YOU WERE EXPOSED TO COVID-19...

This information is for people who may have been exposed—whether on or off campus—but have not tested positive. Learn what to do [if you tested positive](#).

DETERMINE YOUR LEVEL OF RISK AND NEXT STEPS | Ask yourself the following questions:

1 AM I FULLY VACCINATED?

- Vaccination is the best way to reduce the risk of severe infection. It might not prevent all infections, but it reduces your chance of hospitalization.
- Unvaccinated people are at very high risk of serious disease, hospitalization, and death.

2 DO I MEET ALL 4 CRITERIA OF A “CLOSE CONTACT”?

True close contact exposures have the highest risk of infection.

1. **Exposed to someone confirmed to be infected** (either via positive PCR test or a contact tracer told them to treat themselves as if they had a positive PCR test), and
2. Interaction was **indoors**, and
3. Interaction was close—**less than 6 feet away**, and
4. Interaction lasted **at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period** (exceptions apply for close interactions with healthcare workers who wear protective equipment—but mention it to your contact tracer)

→ Required Next Steps if You Meet All 4 Criteria:

- Report your exposure to HUHS via [Crimson Clear](#). Respond to and follow instructions from contact tracers.
- Maintain your testing cadence (if enrolled in Harvard’s testing program). You can be on campus to pick up and submit your test(s), but you must be fully masked at all times. Take one of your tests 4-5 days after your exposure and another test 8 days after exposure. If not enrolled in Harvard’s testing program, seek [local testing options](#).
- Monitor how your body feels over the next 14 days. Know the [COVID symptoms](#).
- Report any symptoms to HUHS immediately via [Crimson Clear](#). Then take an extra test, and stay home. If you need food, wear a mask and pick up a grab-and-go meal to eat privately at home.
- **Quarantine if unvaccinated or if you have any symptoms.** The HUHS contact tracer will give you instructions. While waiting for guidance, stay home and do not attend in-person class or work; if enrolled in Harvard’s testing program, you may pick up and submit tests on campus (fully masked), and get food (grab and go only, fully masked). Otherwise, you must stay home and avoid physical interaction with other people.
- **If fully vaccinated and without symptoms**, you may attend in-person class or work but you must not participate in any unmasked in-person activities, including eating with other people (unless 6 feet apart).
- **Keep your phone nearby and answer all calls from HUHS.** Be patient if waiting to hear from HUHS contact tracers. Our team must focus first on contacting people who tested positive because they pose the greatest risk to the rest of our campus community. When a person with known infection has many close contacts, it may take our team some time to notify all contacts and conduct interviews.

Questions continue on next page.

3 WHAT IS MY RISK IF I'M NOT TECHNICALLY A "CLOSE CONTACT" BUT I STILL HAD AN EXPOSURE?

Infection risk can fall within a range and exposure depends on the following:

- **Indoors vs. outdoors:** Outdoor activities have lower risk than indoor activities. Semi-outdoor activities (being in a semi-enclosed outdoor structure) fall in between.
- **Proximity:** There is no invisible wall at 6 feet. 8 feet is safer than 6 feet. Extremely close proximity (e.g., 6 inches from your nose to another person's nose) is riskier than 2 feet.
- **Duration:** Brief interactions lasting a couple of seconds are very unlikely to have any risk unless there is extremely close proximity.
- **Masks:** Wearing a mask that covers your nose and mouth and has a good seal around the edges reduces risk.

→ Common Sense Measures to Minimize Risks to Your Friends, Loved Ones, and the Community

- Reduce your social activity level according to your level of risk. For example, you can go to a controlled environment like a classroom, but don't remove your mask. Consider postponing any coffee or dinner dates, and don't attend parties, because these activities involve removing your mask.
- Maintain your testing cadence (if enrolled in Harvard's testing program). Consider submitting an extra test 4-5 days after your exposure and another test about 8 days after exposure. If not enrolled in Harvard's testing program, seek [local testing options](#).
- Monitor how your body feels over the next two weeks. Know the [COVID symptoms](#).
- If you develop symptoms, report them to HUHS immediately via [Crimson Clear](#). Then take an extra test, and stay home. If you need food, wear a mask and pick up a grab-and-go meal to eat privately at home.

4 I INTERACTED WITH PEOPLE AFTER MY EXPOSURE. ARE THEY AT RISK?

- You are not likely to be highly infectious—if you are even infected at all—unless you have already tested positive.
- You do not need to warn others about your status as a close contact right now—wait until you know if you are indeed infected. This avoids unnecessary anxiety and disruption for people who may not be at risk.

IF YOU ARE FEELING ANXIOUS | *Take a moment to calm yourself:*

Although exposure does not mean you will be infected, learning that you might have been exposed can be frightening.

1. Close your eyes and relax your shoulders.
2. Place the palm of one hand on the middle of your chest and the other on your belly.
3. Take 3-5 slow, deep breaths, and note the comforting sensation while you focus on your own breathing.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Managing Fears and Anxiety around COVID-19](#)
- [harvard.edu/coronavirus](#)
- *Students:* Counseling and Mental Health Services' CAMHS Cares, (617) 495-2042
- [huhs.harvard.edu](#)
- *Employees:* Employee Assistance Program, (877) 327-4278
- [cdc.gov/coronavirus](#)

Please avoid calling the HUHS clinic number unless you need medical care so that our clinical staff can prioritize sick patients who require medical attention.

