

I'm COVID Positive, Now What?

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Recently I have had reports of an increased number of COVID positive cases. Phone calls and conversations have started this way. "I'm COVID positive, or I've got COVID". You may have even heard this from your friends, family members or acquaintances. If you test positive for COVID-19, there are things you need to do to take care of yourself and help stop the spread of disease to others. Most individuals recover from COVID-19 at home and cases now are milder but it is important to know when you should seek further treatment. Here's what you should know.

1. **We are not done with COVID and COVID is not done with us.** The CDC reports a summertime surge of new COVID variants.
 - a. *Be vigilant for symptoms including fever, cough, hoarseness, sore throat, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell and particularly fatigue.*
 - b. *Consider getting a COVID test as soon as possible, symptoms or not. Home test kits can be purchased at any pharmacy and are accurate and reliable.*
2. **Practice preventive measures.**
 - a. *Strongly consider a COVID vaccine (booster).*
 - b. *Continue to follow preventive measures such as wearing masks, avoiding large get togethers and practice washing your hands frequently.*
3. **Reach out to your healthcare provider by phone.** Tell them you tested positive for COVID-19 and are home recovering.
The medication, Paxlovid, depending on your age and underlying health status may be warranted and you could benefit if given within 5-7 days of the start of your symptoms.
4. **Take it easy.**
 - a. *Rest up and stay hydrated.*
 - b. *Over-the-counter medications may help manage the symptoms but not the virus.*
 - c. *Monitor your symptoms.*
5. **Seek immediate attention from your physician if you experience rapid deterioration or worsening symptoms such as difficulty breathing or inability to stay awake.**
6. **Do the right preventive thing.**
 - a. *Self-isolate yourself.*
 - b. *Stay home and away from others.*
 - c. *Don't go to work or school and avoid public places.*
 - d. *Stay away from others at home.*
 - e. *Wear a high-quality mask correctly if you absolutely need to be around other people within your home, or when seeking medical attention.*
 - f. *Let your close contacts know so they can watch for symptoms and take the test.*
7. **Return to your normal activities. When you have gone at least 24 hours and your symptoms are getting better, and you are fever-free (without meds). Continue the preventive measures for the next 5 days so that you reduce the possibility of spreading the virus to others. You may still be able to spread the virus even when you are feeling better.** *Adapted for Choose Healthy Life by Langston D. Smith. DMD*