

Public Health Special Press Release

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COMMUNITY QUESTIONS AND TERMS TO KNOW FOR COVID-19

Isolation: Separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

Quarantine: Separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.

- Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease.

Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period *starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

You are also considered a close contact if you:

- Provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Had direct physical contact with someone who is sick with COVID-19 (hugged or kissed them)
- Shared eating or drinking utensils with someone who is sick with COVID-19
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

❖ **What is the point of wearing a mask, and other Public Health recommendations?**

- Masking, physical distancing, hand hygiene practices, and limiting social interactions are all proven mitigation techniques **intended to keep businesses open and keep the economy strong**, while simultaneously **minimizing the risk of viral transmission in every community**.
- Masks are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the mask coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice. This is called source control. This recommendation is based on what we know about the role respiratory droplets play in the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, paired with emerging evidence from clinical and laboratory studies that shows **masks reduce the spray of droplets when worn over the nose and mouth**. COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are in close contact with one another.
- Due to the fact that **COVID-19 can be spread by people who have no symptoms and do not feel sick**, it is very important that individuals take the basic precautions to avoid unknowingly spreading the virus to others.
- CDC currently estimates that 40-45% of new cases are contracted from people with no symptoms.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO DEVELOP NEW SYMPTOMS SHOULD ASSUME THEY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED TO COVID-19 AND TAKE THE APPROPRIATE PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID SPREADING THE VIRUS.

- ❖ If you develop new symptoms:
 - The best way to protect the people around you is to **self-isolate for a period of 10 days** and contact your provider.

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- Not everyone will need to be tested; some people will have minor symptoms and recover during isolation.
 - Isolation means **no contact** with anyone.
 - COVID-19 is highly contagious; based on the current estimated R-naught value of this virus, without isolation protocol, the average infected person will spread the virus to a minimum of two other people.
 - This rate of spread leads to exponential growth if strict controls are not maintained.
 - If people are not following strict isolation protocol after testing positive, the virus can quickly spread to their family, other members of their household, and the greater community.

- ❖ Community members who **do not have symptoms** should also assume they have been exposed to COVID-19 via community spread and **be consistent about covering their nose and mouth with a mask to reduce the likelihood of transmission to others.**