Quarantine Guidance for Close Contacts to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cases

These quarantine instructions are for people who live in the same household or have had close contact with someone with Coronavirus Disease 2019, COVID-19. Cases, or people with COVID-19, can be contagious 48 hours before they have symptoms, when they have symptoms, or even if they are not showing symptoms.

"Close contact" with a case is defined as living in the same house as a case, being an intimate partner of a case, being a caregiver of a case, or being within 6 feet of a case for longer than 15 minutes. Since you are a close contact of a case, please follow these steps to help prevent COVID-19 from spreading in your home or in your community.

What is COVID-19?

It is a new virus and is in almost all countries worldwide. Symptoms can be mild to severe with cough, fever and shortness of breath the most common. COVID-19 is spread from an infected person when they cough, breathe or sneeze, and the virus then enters another person's mouth, eyes or nose. You can also get it when an infected person touches a surface that another person touches and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth. COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily. People are thought to be most contagious when they are sickest, but the virus can also be found in persons who are infected with COVID-19 but do not have symptoms. These people may be able to spread the virus to others. Luckily, most cases are mild or moderate and most people don't need to be in the hospital. Some cases can get more serious and cause pneumonia and breathing difficulties.

Home Quarantine - Why am I being asked to do it?

You are being asked to quarantine because you have been exposed to a person with COVID-19. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

It can take 2-14 days to show symptoms, so you may not know for up to 14 days if you are infected or not. You have been asked to self-quarantine in case you are infected so that you do not pass on the infection to anyone else. It may turn out that you are not infected, but it is too soon to tell.

How long do I need to self-quarantine?

Since it can take 2-14 days to show symptoms, your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when you were last in contact with the person with COVID-19.

If you continue to live with and/or care for the person with COVID-19, the quarantine guidance is as follows:

- If there is close contact with a person with COVID-19 (being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes or touching body fluids or secretions without using the appropriate precautions), the 14-day quarantine period will have to restart. Body fluids or secretions include sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine and diarrhea.

- If you are unable to avoid close contact, you should stay in quarantine until day 14 from when the person with COVID-19 became eligible to be "cleared" from their own isolation.

- If you do seek testing, a negative test result within the 14-day period does not mean that you cannot become positive later. You must stay in quarantine for the entire 14-day period.

What must I do if I am self-quarantining? What are the restrictions?

You must restrict activities and limit all movements that may put you in contact with others during the quarantine period.

- Stay home. Do not go to work, school, or public areas.

- Do not use public transportation, ride shares or taxis.

- Do not allow visitors into your home.

- Separate yourself from others in your home.

- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home as much as possible. It is very important to stay away from people who are at higher risk of serious illness. This includes people who are age 65 years and older, pregnant, or have a health problem such as a diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic disease or a weak immune system. Consider different living arrangements for these high-risk people if possible.

- Wear a cloth face covering if you must go around others in the home.

- Use a separate bathroom, if available.

- Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others.

- Do not prepare or serve food to others.

- Avoid caring for children if possible.

- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol based hand sanitizer.

- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.

- Avoid sharing household items.

- Clean and disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces every day. High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tables, and bedside tables. Also, clean and disinfect any surfaces that may have body fluids on them. Follow label instructions for household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes used to ensure effectiveness.

What if I develop symptoms?

If you develop symptoms, you may have COVID-19 and you should follow the Home Isolation Instructions. COVID-19 symptoms include cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or loss of taste or smell. **Call your medical provider about testing.**

You will need to remain home for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms; additionally, you must have been at least 24 hours with no fever (without using medication to reduce your temperature) and your respiratory symptoms are better. Some persons may need to isolate for a longer period. An infectious disease physician will help determine if this needed. Follow the instructions for home isolation as listed above and available at: **https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-aresick/index.html**

Monitor your symptoms closely and seek medical care early if symptoms become severe. If symptoms worsen or continue and you need to seek medical care, call your healthcare provider in advance, or 9-1-1 in an emergency, and let them know you are a close contact to a person with confirmed COVID-19. Wear a mask when seeking medical care.

If you are 65 years and older, pregnant, or have a health condition such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease, or a weakened immune system, you are at higher risk of more serious illness or complications.

Where can I be tested?

In addition to healthcare facility and commercial laboratory testing, community-based testing sites are available. Your healthcare provider may send you to a specific testing site. A list of known testing sites in New York is available at **https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you**

If you continue to live with and/or care for the person with COVID-19, the quarantine guidance is as follows:

■ If there is close contact with a person with COVID-19 (being within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes or touching body fluids or secretions without using the appropriate precautions}, the 14-day quarantine period will have to restart. Body fluids or secretions include sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine and diarrhea.

Will Public Health notify my workplace?

You should notify your workplace about the need to stay at home. Public Health will not notify or release any personal information about you to your workplace unless it is necessary to do so to protect your health or the health of others.

What should I do about the basic necessities that I will need while I quarantine?

Family, friends or social networks, like church groups, may be able to help you with food, medications and other needs during this time. If you do not have these resources, contact your local health department for assistance.

Local Health Department contact information: **https://www.ny.gov/local** (search by county)

New York has a free, confidential helpline as part of the FEMA response to COVID-19. Call 1-844-863-9314 or visit **nyprojecthope.org**. For additional resources available to those looking to manage COVID-related anxiety, grief and more, visit **https://omh.ny.gov/omhweb/covid-19-resources.html**

Thank you for your cooperation in this important public health matter.

Additional information is available at the following web sites:

www.ThompsonHealth.com/COVID

https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/coronavirus.aspx

https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus