

Knox Public Health

What are Isolation & Quarantine - Common Questions & Answers

What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Quarantine: This is for well people (not experiencing symptoms) who have known contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. The time period in which someone is quarantined will be 14 days from their last date of contact with the confirmed individual - and is therefore known as a *Close Contact*. It is **strongly** recommended to complete the full 14 days for quarantine to ensure that you are not infected with COVID-19. However, you can come out of quarantine sooner if you are asymptomatic (not presenting any symptoms).

If you are asymptomatic, get a COVID-19 test (either antigen/ "rapid" or PCR), and the results are negative, then your quarantine ends at 12 midnight on day 7 and you are out of quarantine on day 8.

If you are asymptomatic and choose not to get a COVID-19 test, then your quarantine ends at 12 midnight on day 10 and you are out of quarantine on day 11.

Isolation: This is for sick people. Either people who have been tested and confirmed as having COVID-19, or those experiencing the symptoms associated with COVID-19. This time period is 10 days due to what we currently know about the virus and how long research shows that an individual remains contagious.

QUARANTINE (CLOSE CONTACTS)



QUARANTINE keeps someone who might have been exposed to a communicable disease away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others and monitor their symptoms.

A NEGATIVE TEST DOES NOT RELEASE SOMEONE FROM QUARANTINE!

The viral load may not be high enough to detect at the time of testing, therefore you can still get sick within the 14-day quarantine time period.

When does quarantine end?

- If you're a close contact with a COVID-19 case and will have no further contact with the ill person, your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact
- If you live with a COVID-19 case, you should avoid contact with others outside the home and quarantine for typically 24 days. Your 14-day quarantine cannot start until the infected person is no longer ill. For most people, that is 10 days, so a contact's typical quarantine period is 10 + 14 = 24 days.

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ISOLATION (CASES)



ISOLATION separates people **who are infected** with a communicable disease from people who are not infected. Isolated persons are asked to actively monitor their symptoms and separate themselves from other household members in a **specific "sick room"**. If possible use a separate bathroom.

Who needs to isolate?

- People who have COVID-19
- People who have symptoms of COVID-19 and are able to recover at home
- People who have no symptoms (are asymptomatic) but have tested positive for COVID-19

When does isolation end?

- At least **10 days** since symptoms first appeared **and**
- *At least 24 hours since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- *Symptoms have improved
- If tested positive for COVID-19, but show no symptoms, you can be with others **after 10 days** have passed since test

*On July 17, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance for duration of isolation and precautions for COVID-19.

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Why is quarantine strongly recommended for 14 days, but I know that the positive case is only in isolation for 10 days?

Unlike someone who has tested positive and is already infected and/or experiencing symptoms, it can take someone who is exposed to the virus up to 14 days since exposure to show symptoms and become contagious.

However, at any time should you start showing symptoms, you need to self-isolate immediately.

Who do I reach out to if I have additional questions?

Please first reach out to the positive case's Public Health Investigator or your designated Contact Tracer by email or phone, and give them at least 24 hours to respond. If after 24 hours you have not received communication back, then call the Knox Public Health COVID-19 Call Line: 740-399-8014 or visit our website where many of your questions may be answered (<https://bit.ly/3pWgtGH>). Please note, the call line has up to 72 hours turnaround time on receiving a call back.

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ISOLATION

What does it mean to be in isolation?

Please follow these steps to help ensure that the spread of the virus to your household and community members is minimized:

- Sleep in a room by yourself
- Use your own restroom - If this is not attainable, then make sure to wipe down surfaces after each use.
- Use your own eating and drinking utensils
- Do not use common areas in your home
- Stay home - While in isolation, you cannot leave your home. If you need groceries or medication, please try to enlist friends and family to help by picking these items up and leaving them on your doorstep. Should this become an issue, please contact Knox Public Health.

Can I spend time outside?

Yes, but you need to do so alone and on your own property.

If I am not experiencing symptoms, do I still have to stay in isolation and not spend time with my household members?

Yes. During the 10 day isolation period, you are contagious and should not spend time with other people as they may become sick and experience a much more difficult time with the virus than you did.

I share a kitchen with roommates/housemates, how do I make myself meals?

First, check with your roommates to see if they can help you with making meals. Second, we know that can be a lot to ask of roommates for 10 days. So, follow these steps to help ensure you minimizing the spread of the virus in this shared space:

- Wear a mask
- When you are in this shared space, do so alone
- Make sure to disinfect any surfaces you touched, utensils you utilized, and clean your own dirty dishes

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QUARANTINE

Who is a close contact?

A close contact is when you are within a 6-foot distance of somebody for 15 minutes or longer. When that happens, we strongly recommend those who were in close contact with the positive case to self-quarantine for 14 days from their last day of contact. COVID-19 is easily spread when an infected person, coughs, sneezes, speaks or breaths. It can even spread on surfaces that are frequently touched.

Close contacts are individuals identified by the positive case to the health department. KPH is only aware of the individuals that a positive case provides information for.

A positive case is provided all of the information a close contact will need to complete quarantine successfully - including the Order of Quarantine letter for both household members and out of household contacts. ONLY if a positive case would like to remain anonymous to their close contacts, will KPH call a close contact and provide their Order of Quarantine letter directly.

What counts as close contact?



Standing within 6 feet for 15 minutes



Direct physical contact



Shared utensils



A nearby sneeze or cough



Home care for someone who is sick with COVID-19

How long is quarantine?

Quarantine is strongly recommended for 14 days by the CDC and the Ohio Department of Health. However, if you are asymptomatic (not presenting symptoms) during your quarantine, the duration may be shortened by the health department.

If you are **asymptomatic** and get tested for COVID-19 and the results come back **NEGATIVE**, then your quarantine ends at 12 midnight on day 7 and you are out of quarantine on day 8.

If you do not get tested, but still **remain asymptomatic** during your quarantine, your quarantine ends at 12 midnight on day 10 and you are out of quarantine on day 11.

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What does it mean to be in quarantine?

These are things you can do to reduce the risk that you transmit the virus to others in your household:

- Keep 6 feet from other people at all times. If you can't, wear a mask.
- Do not have visitors in your home.
- If possible, you will need to sleep alone in a room that has a window with good airflow.
- If possible, use a separate bathroom. If not, you will need to wipe down/sanitize the surfaces you have touched after each use.
- Your bathrooms should be cleaned every day using household disinfectant.
- Wipe down surfaces that touch frequently with disposable cloths, using bleach if possible, or household cleaners.
- You should use your own plate, bowl, and utensils – do not share these or food with anyone.
- Wash your laundry separately with detergent; bleach can be used but is not needed.
- Don't forget the basics: Avoid touching your face as much as possible. Cover your mouth with tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue away, and wash your hands immediately after.
- Wash your hands frequently throughout the day with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Anyone you come in contact with (including anyone in your home) should be aware of their health and watch themselves for fever, cough, and other symptoms.

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.



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Can I go to school during my quarantine?

No. In our efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 amongst large gatherings of people, you cannot attend school in person during your quarantine period. The school has been notified of your quarantine status, and therefore will not allow you into the building/on campus until you have successfully completed quarantine.

The Order of Quarantine letter we have provided to you can be provided to the school as proof of your excused absence.

Can I continue to work while in quarantine?

If you are an essential worker, you can still go to work as long as you:

- A. Are symptom free
- B. Inform your employer of the situation
- C. You wear a mask the entire time, and
- D. You only go to and from work/home.

If you begin to show ANY SYMPTOMS, you should no longer go to work.

If you ARE NOT AN ESSENTIAL WORKER, then the Order of Quarantine letter we have sent to you can be provided to your employer as proof of your excused absence.

What happens if I start experiencing symptoms?

We ask that you self-isolate for 10 days from that day. If after day 10, you haven't had a fever for 24 hours and you feel better, you could discontinue isolation and return to quarantine protocol.

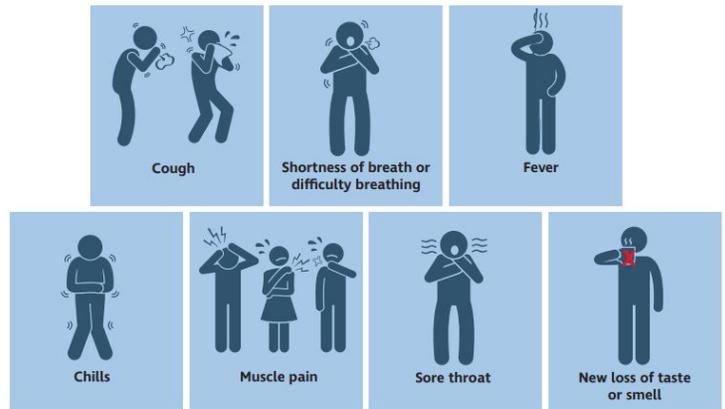
If your 10 days of self-isolation lasts longer than your original quarantine period, then your quarantine is considered extended until your symptoms have improved and you have not had a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

If during the course of your quarantine you experience chest pain or shortness of breath, *call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.*

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What symptoms should I be watching for and indicating during my quarantine?

- Cough
- Shortness of breath / chest pain
- Muscle aches
- Chills
- Sore throat
- Runny nose/congestion
- Nausea / vomiting / diarrhea / abdominal pain
- Loss of smell or taste
- Headache
- Pink eye
- Fever



If you do experience severe symptoms during your quarantine, please seek medical care.

What if I have chronic health conditions? (Like diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or COPD)

If you have chronic health conditions, you may be at an increased risk of experiencing more serious symptoms of COVID-19. During your course of quarantine, *if you are experiencing chest pain or shortness of breath, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.*

What happens if I start to experience symptoms, get a COVID-19 test, and the results come back positive?

If you are tested and your test shows you have Coronavirus, a Knox Public Health Investigator will call you to gather information about the people you have been around since a few days before your symptoms started. That's good to think about and write down now so your memory is fresh. From now on it will be important to separate yourself from close contact with people and stay in your home.

From the time when you take the test/start experiencing symptoms, you should have been in isolation - not being around anyone and staying in a room by yourself and using a designated restroom.

When the Investigator contacts you, they will determine your new "out date" for isolation based on when your symptoms began (or the date of your test if you were asymptomatic at the time of testing).

*** Please allow up to 48 hours since you received notice of your positive test result for a Knox Public Health Investigator to contact you. After 48 hours, if an Investigator has not called you, then first call the facility where you were tested and ensure your results were sent to KPH. If your results need faxed to KPH, please have them sent to: 740-392-5482.*