
COVID-19 Exposure FAQ

What is a COVID-19 Exposure?

A COVID-19 exposure is defined as having at least 15 minutes of close contact (within 6 feet) of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Do I need to quarantine?

If **BOTH** the exposed individual **AND** the confirmed case to which they were exposed were wearing an appropriate mask during the duration of exposure, no quarantine is required. Exposed individuals should continue to monitor for symptoms and wear a mask.

If either the exposed individual **OR** the confirmed case did not correctly wear an appropriate facial covering during the exposure period, the exposed individual will need to quarantine for 14 days from the date of last exposure.

What is an appropriate facial covering?

Facial coverings should have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric. They should cover the nose and mouth snugly. Use of gaiters and face shields will not prevent quarantine as effectiveness is unknown. CDC guidance on appropriate facial coverings can be found at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html)

What does quarantine look like?

When in quarantine, you must stay home, watch for symptoms, and try to stay away from others in the home for 14 days from the day of last exposure. If a quarantined individual lives in the home of a confirmed COVID-19 case and is unable to isolate from that individual, the 14 day quarantine will begin at the end of the confirmed case's isolation period (24 days total). If you start to feel ill, contact your doctor for testing or visit www.testiowa.com. Quarantined individuals may be outside in their yard, but should remain on their property and physically away from other people. Virtual socialization is encouraged to prevent feelings of isolation.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.

What should I do if I become sick while in quarantine?

If you become ill, call your doctor for testing and diagnosis. Mild symptoms can be treated with rest and fluids. Over the counter medications can be used for symptoms management (i.e. a fever reducer).

Should I get tested?

Testing is advised for individuals that become symptomatic while in quarantine and can be completed at their doctor's office or at www.testiowa.com. Negative test results will not shorten a quarantine.

What if an exposed individual tests positive?

Exposed individuals that subsequently test positive for COVID-19 will be removed from quarantine status and placed in a 10 day isolation. Any household contacts will then be placed into a 14 day quarantine for monitoring. The state or local health department will follow up with any confirmed cases for a disease investigation and contact tracing.

Should other household members also be quarantined?

Unless they were also exposed to the confirmed case of COVID-19, other household members of the exposed individual will not be quarantined. An exposure to an exposure is not an exposure. They should try to limit contact with the exposed individual in the home as possible. If the exposed individual tests positive for the virus, all household members will then be placed in quarantine.

If I have been exposed once, can I be exposed again?

Yes. Exposures do not build immunity unless the individual becomes infected, so multiple exposures can result in multiple quarantines. If someone has tested positive for COVID-19, they are considered immune for up to three months and will not be quarantined for exposures during that time period.

How can I protect myself from exposure?

Risk of exposure can be reduced by keeping a six-foot distance from other people, wearing a mask, and washing hands frequently.

Who can I call with more questions?

Dallas County residents can contact the Dallas County Health Department with any questions at 515-993-3750 or phn@dallascountyiowa.gov. General information can also be obtained by calling 2-1-1. The 2-1-1 Language Helpline is available to assist Iowan's in other languages at 1-877-558-2609.

*Information was updated on 10/09/2020 and is subject to change as new guidance is provided.