

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Contact Tracing

What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is used by public health officials to learn who may have been infected by someone who has tested positive for an infectious disease. The Allegheny County Health Department performs contact tracing on all positive cases of COVID-19.

Health Department staff call and ask each person who has tested positive for COVID-19 to list of all the people they have had close contact with starting two days before they first noticed symptoms.

Staff then notify the close contacts and may recommend them to self-quarantine.

How does contact tracing help slow the spread of COVID-19?

Contact tracing can stop the spread of the virus from people who may have contacted it through a close contact but don't yet show symptoms.

People can spread the disease before showing symptoms and may never show symptoms but still be able to spread the disease. Contact tracing helps stop the spread of COVID-19 by letting people know they may have the disease before they get sick.

A friend has COVID-19, and I saw them recently. Why haven't I been contacted by the Health Department?

Not every contact is a close contact. The CDC defines a close contact as anyone who has been within 6 feet of a person infected with the virus for more than a brief interaction or has had direct contact with the virus through things like being coughed on or touching used tissues with bare hands.

The circle of possible close contacts normally includes the sick person's family. If the Health Department does not believe you were at risk of exposure, you may not be called during contact tracing.

