

ALLEGHENY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT COVID-19 GUIDANCE

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE BASICS

(updated 12/4/2020)

Due to the volume of new cases, it may take longer than expected for the Health Department to reach new cases of COVID-19 and their close contacts. Some people may not be reached at all. Here is what to do if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are a close contact.

YOU HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 (ISOLATION)

What should I do?

- **Isolate:** Avoid all others. Only leave your home for medical care. Remain isolated for 10 days since you first experienced symptoms of COVID-19 or 24 hours after symptoms improve, whichever is longer.
- If you tested positive and did not have symptoms, remain isolated for 10 days starting from the date you had your positive test taken.
- If you live with others, **stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom** if possible. Don't share personal items. Clean and disinfect your home and frequently touched surfaces regularly. Wear a mask when around others and have them wear masks too.
- **Do not get another test for COVID-19.** You should NOT get a follow-up test to go back to work or school or to end isolation after 10 days. It is very common for the test to remain positive for a couple of months, even though you are no longer able to spread the virus.

What will happen?

- **Case investigation:** If you see a number you don't recognize – it won't be blocked or unlisted – it may be a case investigator with the Health Department calling to gather information about you. *The Remember, the Health Department will never ask for financial information including social security, bank account or credit card numbers.*
- To make case investigations faster, the Health Department representative may ask you to **fill out an online form**. This is secure and confidential.
- **Contact tracing:** You will be asked for names and phone numbers of recent close contacts. A close contact is anyone who you were within 6 feet or less of for 15 minutes or more – with or without a mask – since two days before you first noticed symptoms. A Health Department contact tracer will call these people and advise them to quarantine and get tested. Your name will not be disclosed to your close contacts.
- If you tested positive but are not contacted, **continue to isolate and notify close contacts** on your own. You should ask close contacts to get tested and quarantine according to the instructions below.

What if I tested negative for COVID-19 but had symptoms or was a close contact?

- Even with a negative test, you should **quarantine** according to the instructions below. If symptoms persist, consider waiting a couple of days and get tested a second time.
- Despite advances in our knowledge of COVID-19 and testing, **false negative tests** are still possible.

YOU ARE A CLOSE CONTACT OF SOMEONE WITH COVID-19 (QUARANTINE)

What should I do?

- **Quarantine:** Avoid people outside your household. Only leave your house for medical care. Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Quarantining for 14 days after your last possible exposure is the best way to limit the spread of COVID-19. Quarantine may be ended early if the following conditions are met:
 - 1) After 10 days if a person does not develop any symptoms with careful monitoring.
 - 2) If there are sufficient local testing resources, quarantine can end after 7 days if the person does not develop symptoms with careful daily monitoring and tests negative for the virus. The test should be performed on the fifth day after the exposure or later. Quarantine cannot end before day 7. The Health Department prefers that a PCR test be used to determine if a person can leave quarantine after 7 days.
- **Get tested:** It is important to know if you have COVID-19 and should isolate and notify your close contacts. It is recommended you wait until at least the fifth day after your last known exposure to get tested. A map of testing locations in the county is available here: <https://bit.ly/ACTestingSiteMap>

What will happen?

- **Contact tracing:** If you see a number you don't recognize – it won't be blocked or unlisted – it may be the Health Department calling to do contact tracing. Answer the phone and follow the instructions. *Remember, the Health Department will never ask you for financial information including social security, bank account or credit card numbers.*
- Due to the number of new cases, the Health Department may not complete contact tracing for all cases. If a friend, co-worker, family member, school or university says you are a close contact, please **quarantine and get tested** according to the instructions above.

HELP IS AVAILABLE

Isolating or quarantining because of COVID-19 can be challenging, but they are important tools to contain the virus. Help is available through the United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania by calling 2-1-1 or by calling the Health Department's COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-856-2774. Resources include:

- Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank's home delivery service (Doorstep Delivery) is available to individuals 60+ who cannot leave their home. For more information about food assistance call 412-460-3663, ext. 655 or visit www.pittsburghfoodbank.org.
- Housing assistance: Allegheny Link has is encouraging those in need of housing services and support to call them at 866-730-2368 or email AlleghenyLink@AlleghenyCounty.us
- Child care assistance: Trying Together has partnered with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services to provide information on finding child care at www.tryingtogether.org/find-child-care. Help is also available by calling Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) Region 5 at 412-350-3577
- Assistance for seniors: Allegheny County's SeniorLine can be reached at 412-350-5460
- Substance abuse disorder assistance: PA Get Help Now can be reached at 1-800-662-HELP
- To report child abuse or neglect: Call Childline at 1-800-932-0313
- Concerned about abuse or neglect of an older adult or an adult with disabilities: Older Adult Protective Service can be reached at 412-350-6905 or 1-800-490-8505

