



May 26, 2021

Per Whatcom County Health Department and Greg Stern, MD, School Districts may now shorten the 14-day quarantine for identified close contacts of a known positive COVID-19 case. Mount Baker School District and other Districts in Whatcom County are implementing these changes to promote students' mental health and decrease hardships for students and families.

A close contact is defined as a person who has been in contact with a known COVID-19 positive person and meets the following criteria: six-feet or closer for more than 15-minutes in a 24-hour period with or without a mask.

**When Mount Baker School District identifies a known positive COVID-19 person who was on school grounds and identifies those people considered a close contact of the known positive COVID-19 case, the following guidelines will be implemented to determine quarantine time for all persons:**

**The known positive COVID-19 case** must be quarantined for a full 10-days from symptom onset, or if no symptoms from the test date. Before returning, the person must be symptom free without the use of medications for full 24-hours.

**The identified close contact(s)** may choose one of the following options:

1. Quarantine for a full 14-days without testing and return to school and school activities if symptom free. This continues to be the recommendation from CDC and the Department of Health for being the safest option.
2. Quarantine for a full 10-days and obtain a negative PCR test taken later than day 5 of the quarantine period (rapid testing is not as accurate for symptom free individuals). If the test results are negative and the close contact has no symptoms, the person may return to school and school related activities at the end of the full 10-days. If choosing the 10-day option with a negative test and no symptoms, the person should continue monitoring for signs and symptoms for the full 14-days and quarantine immediately if symptoms develop and retest.

It is suggested to use the drive-through testing located at Bellingham Airport for the quickest results, usually 12-24 hours unless backlogged.

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### COVID-19 Testing Information

For information on COVID-19 testing, visit the Whatcom County Health Department website at <https://whatcomcounty.us/3388/COVID-19-Testing>.

**You can make a COVID-19 testing appointment in two ways:**

1. **Online** at [TestDirectly.com](https://www.testdirectly.com) - Use the [TestDirectly How-To](#) (PDF) for a user guide (also available in [Spanish](#) and [Russian](#)).
2. **By phone** at 360-778-6075 - Phone lines are open Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Interpretation services for languages other than English are available by phone.

Anyone can get tested, including people without insurance or a physician referral:

- If you have insurance, you must provide insurance information for billing purposes when you schedule an appointment. People with insurance may be held responsible for the cost of a COVID-19 test if they do not provide their existing health insurance information.
- If you don't have insurance, you can also be tested at no cost to you through a federal program that will reimburse the health department for all costs.

All test results should be emailed, faxed or given to the school secretaries at the student's school. Staff should provide the results to their school administrator. If emailing, please write CONFIDENTIAL in the subject line and attach the results. Test results will need to be verified by the secretaries and/or administrators for date and time to comply with the 10-day quarantine.

Persons who are fully vaccinated (2 shots of Pfizer or Moderna, or 1 shot of J&J) and a full two weeks from the last shot do not need to be quarantined if symptom free.