



August 4, 2020

## FAQ: CONTACT TRACING and COVID-19

- **What is contact tracing?**
  - Contact tracing is the process being used by schools, businesses, and organizations to determine when individuals have been most directly exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **What are the parameters for contact tracing?**
  - Individuals who have been within six feet for longer than 15 minutes of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 are considered close contacts and must follow the current protocols.
- **What initiates the contact tracing process?**
  - A positive test initiates contact tracing, and is expected to begin immediately upon being notified of a positive case.
- **Is contact tracing a violation of my privacy? What about HIPAA?**
  - It is our duty to exclude individuals from school based on medical scenarios that include a pandemic. We will not share personal information with others.
  - Contact tracing allows us to identify individuals who are a close contact so they can quarantine for the appropriate time.
- **I've been identified as a close contact. What do I do now?**
  - Once you've been notified that you're a close contact, you should immediately quarantine and contact your health care provider.
  - Students and staff who are close contacts may not return to school for 14 days following the date that the individual they were in contact with received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.
  - Close contacts should watch for symptoms of COVID-19, and follow-up with their health care provider should they develop.
- **Are close contacts required to be tested for COVID-19? Should they be tested, even if it's not required?**
  - Close contacts should follow the guidance of their healthcare provider.

- **My spouse is a close contact with someone from work who tested positive for COVID-19. Does that mean our entire family must quarantine? Should we all be tested?**
  - No. Only close contacts are required to quarantine, unless the close contact and/or family members exhibit symptoms of COVID-19.
  - You should follow your healthcare provider's direction regarding testing.
- **What if someone is sent home from school due to having COVID-19 symptoms, but the family chooses not to test. Does contact tracing occur?**
  - The individual who was sent home will be considered a positive COVID-19 case without an alternative diagnosis from a healthcare provider.
  - The individual must quarantine for 10 days unless they can provide a note from their healthcare provider stating that symptoms were from an alternate diagnosis.
- **How is contact tracing initiated?**
  - Contact tracing will be initiated by the first-to-know about a positive case, and that is most often the local health department.
  - It is extremely important that parents and staff notify the school when they first learn of a positive result so that schools, the local health department and ISDH can immediately begin case investigation.
- **If an individual is sent home from school with symptoms of COVID-19, will the school notify the teacher and class of a possible positive case?**
  - School families will be notified when there is a confirmed positive case in their child's school.
- **What about parents who choose not to notify the school when someone in their home has tested positive for COVID-19?**
  - Parents should notify the school if someone in their household has tested positive. Students living in the household should quarantine at home for 14 days.
  - The local health department will only notify schools of positive results directly tied to individuals in the school.
- **What if someone at school develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19?**
  - That individual should go home and quarantine as if they have COVID-19, until a healthcare provider determines that the symptoms are caused by something else or confirms a COVID-19 diagnosis.
  - The CDC states that, without clearance from a healthcare provider, individuals should quarantine for 10 days and be fever-free, without

the aid of fever-reducing agents for 24 hours, before returning to school or daily activities.

- *Note that this is a change from the previously-stated 72 hour timeline related to fever.*

- **If someone becomes symptomatic for COVID-19 but the family chooses not to be tested, what are the requirements for quarantine?**
  - In a household, if one individual shows symptoms of COVID-19, all members of the household should seek their healthcare provider's advice. Given testing and a negative result, and when the symptoms have subsided, individuals may return to school.
- **My child was sent home from school due to showing symptoms of COVID-19. How long do they need to stay home?**
  - Anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms is presumed to have COVID until documentation of another illness, from a healthcare provider, can be presented.
  - Without documentation, the individual will be excluded from school for 10 days, and must be fever-free without the aid of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.
- **What are the requirements for a close contact during their quarantine?**
  - Close contacts should wear a mask and stay away from others in the household while quarantining at home.
  - As an example, a student whose parent is quarantined because they are a close contact, would not have to quarantine unless the student was also a close contact of the person who tested positive.
- **If an individual is a close contact, quarantines at home, and then during the quarantine develops COVID-19 symptoms, what are the next steps?**
  - It is highly recommended that a close contact who develops symptoms be tested.
  - While being quarantined, close contacts should wear a mask and maintain a distance from others in the household.
  - At this point, others in the household who were in close contact with the symptomatic individual for the two days prior to the appearance of symptoms, become close contacts and their quarantine period begins when they were exposed and will continue for 14 days.