

## Contact Tracing and Quarantine

### *It Takes a Village*

With rising rates of infection in our communities, health departments are working as quickly as possible to reach new cases for contact tracing, but there is a delay of several days. We all can help our community and reduce rates of infection by following the rules of isolation and quarantine in cases where a positive test is known: *Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should immediately begin isolation, and any household contacts or other known close contacts should begin precautionary quarantine while awaiting formal assessment from the health department.* Healthcare providers who are contacted by patients with questions can reinforce the messaging and promote appropriate and prompt quarantine for close contacts.

As a reminder, Monroe County has changed its Isolation and Quarantine orders to include a start and end date. Individuals can still request a release form if needed by going to <https://www.monroecounty.gov/healthcalls/release>. Both quarantine and isolation are for ten days minimum, however close contacts on quarantine should still continue to monitor closely for symptoms for 14 days. Release from isolation assumes that the individual is fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications and with symptoms improving. Remember: isolation may take longer for immune suppressed patients or if there is continued fever or other significant symptoms.

**Close contact** is defined as exposure for more than 15 continuous minutes, AND within six feet AND during the period starting 48 hours before symptoms appeared until the time the infected person is isolated, AND when one or both people were not wearing masks.

**Quarantine = stay at home** and is used for asymptomatic people with close contact to a confirmed lab case OR for those who have traveled from an area with high incidence of infection. The typical quarantine period is a minimum of ten days since last exposure and symptom free. If symptoms develop during the quarantine period, the Department of Health will encourage testing, and the length and nature of quarantine may be extended, i.e., converted to isolation.



Additionally, there are new recommendations to test household close contacts at seven days (antigen testing is allowed for this cohort) but this DOES NOT SHORTEN the ten-day quarantine period. It is designed to identify other COVID-positive individuals who may be asymptomatic.

With regard to quarantine for household contacts: within home settings, it is often not possible to isolate from other family members, especially where adults are caring for young children, though whenever possible masks and distancing measures should be put in place. In the cases where it is impossible to “break contact” (or fully isolate away from others), the quarantine period becomes longer. It begins with the date of symptom start (or positive COVID test in those who are asymptomatic) and ends ten days after the COVID positive case is released from isolation. This could theoretically mean a quarantine period could last as long as 20 days.