COVID-19:
Navigating exposure and symptoms

If you believe you have been exposed to or are experiencing symptoms concerning for COVID-19, Welia Health recommends you follow these guidelines.

Exposure and close contact

What is exposure?

Any close contact with someone who:

- has tested positive with symptoms or
- has tested positive without symptoms

What is close contact?

Close contact with others includes:

- being within 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or more throughout the course of a day (24 hours)
- caring for someone with COVID-19
- touching
- hugging and/or kissing
- sharing eating or drinking utensils
- being sneezed or coughed on

Quarantine if:

- You've been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 either:
  - 2 days prior to them developing symptoms and anytime during their isolation period
  - OR 2 days prior to their positive test if they do not have symptoms and anytime during their isolation period

Symptoms

Symptoms can range from mild to severe and start **about 2-14 days after exposure to the virus** and include, but are not limited to:

- fever or chills
- cough
- shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- fatigue
- muscle or body aches
- headache
- new loss of taste or smell
- sore throat
- congestion or runny nose
- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhea

Seek emergency medical care or call 9-1-1 if you begin experiencing any of the following:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

Quarantine

What is quarantine?

If you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, you will need to quarantine. During quarantine, you will:

- Stay home to determine if you become sick to prevent infecting others
- Monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19
- Get tested if you develop any symptoms

How long is my quarantine?

Quarantine for 14 days if:

- Someone in your home has COVID-19
- You live in a building with other people where it's hard to stay away from others, making it easy to spread the virus to multiple people

Continue to monitor symptoms through day 14 and get tested if you develop any symptoms.

Quarantine for 10 days if:

- You do not have any symptoms
- AND you have not tested positive for COVID-19
- AND no one in your home has tested positive for COVID-19
- AND you do not live in a building with other people where it's hard to stay away from others, making it easy to spread the virus to multiple people

Continue to monitor symptoms through day 14. Practice social distancing staying 6 feet away from others, avoid large crowds, wear a mask, and wash your hands often.

Quarantine for 7 days if:

- You choose to test no less than 5 days after the close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19
- AND you have a negative test result
- AND you do not have any symptoms
- AND no one in your home has COVID-19 and you do not live in a building with other people where it's hard to stay away from others, making it easy to spread the virus to multiple people

Continue to monitor symptoms through day 14. Practice social distancing staying 6 feet away from others, avoid large crowds, wear a mask, and wash your hands often.

DO NOT end your quarantine period before 7 days for any reason.

If you work in healthcare, your employer will have specific return to work guidance.

Isolation

What is isolation?

Staying home and separating yourself from others **if you have symptoms** or **have a positive COVID-19 test result** to prevent infecting others.

You should isolate yourself away from those you live with, if possible, by using a separate bedroom and bathroom, wearing a mask in shared areas, washing hands often, practicing social distancing, and not sharing items such as drinking glasses, plates, eating utensils, towels or bedding with others.

When should I isolate?

- If you have symptoms for COVID-19, isolate yourself at home and get tested for COVID-19
- If you test positive for COVID-19, isolate yourself at home

How long should isolation last?

- No less than 10 days from the start of your symptoms or if no symptoms, 10 days from the date of your test
- AND your overall symptoms have improved
- AND you are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications

If you do not meet this criterion, you need to stay in isolation until it can be met. When coming out of isolation, continue to wear a mask and social distance in public places.

Are there times when isolation should last longer?

In the following cases, a longer isolation period is recommended:

- If you have severe illness with blood oxygen levels that are continually lower than 90% (or for patients with chronic low oxygen, a 3% decrease from baseline)
- If you have required hospitalization for COVID-19
- If you are severely immunocompromised

Isolate for at least 20 days from either 1) the date you began experiencing symptoms, or 2), if you are not experiencing symptoms, the date of your positive COVID-19 test.

What if you have symptoms and your COVID-19 test is negative?

While a negative test result is reassuring, there is a 20-40% chance that your COVID-19 test is a false negative and you may have COVID-19.

- If you test negative, but have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, isolate for 5 days at home (day 0 is your first day of symptoms).
- If on day 6 you are without a fever for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication AND your symptoms are improving, then mask with a well-fitting mask for 5 additional days. If you cannot use a well-fitting mask, then isolate for 10 days at home. Use a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others, even at home.

Caring for yourself at home

How should I care for myself during COVID-19 illness?

Most individuals can recover from COVID-19 at home. It is helpful to record in a log book and monitor:

- Days of illness
- Temperature
- Blood oxygen level with a pulse oximeter
- Other symptoms

Focus on rest, drinking enough fluids to urinate 4-6 times a day, and use acetaminophen or ibuprofen as directed on package for pain and fever control.

If you have shortness of breath (not severe) follow these home positioning instructions:

- Do not lay flat on your back, laying in other positions and changing positions often helps open your lungs
- Change position every 30 minutes to 2 hours, rotating between being on your left side, stomach, right side, sitting up, and in a reclining position propped up with 2-3 pillows

If your blood oxygen level drops to 90 percent or less, **call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.**

If you develop increasing trouble breathing, persistent chest pain or pressure, new confusion, inability to stay awake, or blue lips or face, **call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency room.**

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your primary care provider.

COVID-19 Helplines

Minnesota Helpline: 651-297-1304 or 800.657.3504

CDC Hotline: 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4635)

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