

# *A Message from the Park County Covid-19 Incident Management Team*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Local Covid-19 and Contact Tracing Efforts**

### **Q: WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF CLOSE CONTACT?**

**A:** Park County Public Health and associated contact tracers use the CDC guidance for determining “close contact.” The close contact designation can be subjective but we start with the operational definition of “within 6 foot of a known exposure for at least 15 minutes.” However, it is important to know that there are many other factors that are assessed when determining this designation such as type of interaction (i.e. kissing, talking, yelling, etc.) For example, if a known positive case was within 2 feet of another person for only 1 minute but sneezed on said person, that additional information may still constitute a “close contact” designation even though they were not “within 6 foot for at least 15 minutes.” Contact tracers will ask questions until they can determine whether an interaction constitutes as a “close contact” or not.

### **Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN QUARANTINE AND ISOLATION?**

**A:** Quarantine is for known close contacts who are not currently symptomatic. They need to remain in the home but may be around other quarantined household members as long as they are not symptomatic. Anyone who is symptomatic needs to be away from ALL people. A quarantine lasts for 14 full days as this is the incubation period for Covid-19.

Isolation is for those who are lab confirmed positives or for known close contacts (quarantined) who become ill or symptomatic. Think “I” for isolation and “I” for ill. Isolated household members need to be separated from quarantined household members. If they are not separated, the household member’s quarantine will begin after the isolated person is completely healthy. Isolation lasts 10 full days as this is the length of time the virus is active.

### **Q: WILL I BE NOTIFIED IF I NEED TO GO INTO ISOLATION/QUARANTINE?**

**A:** Yes, if you are a lab confirmed positive case, you will receive a phone call from either the

hospital lab or the provider who ordered your test. They will alert you that you have tested positive and that you must stay home, isolate, and await a phone call from a Public Health contact tracer.

If you have been identified as a close contact to a lab confirmed positive case, you will be contacted by a Public Health contact tracer.

In each scenario you will have an interview with a Park County contact tracer and will receive official isolation or quarantine orders.

**Q: WHY IS MY QUARANTINE CLOSER TO 16 DAYS INSTEAD OF 14?**

**A:** A quarantine period must last 14 full days as the virus could take up to 14 days to fully develop in the body. So if you were at work with someone (who later tested positive for Covid-19) on Tuesday we will consider Tuesday your “day 0.” We then count 14 full days for your quarantine period and you get to leave your quarantine on the 15<sup>th</sup> day. See Chart A.

**Chart A**



**Q: WHY IS MY ISOLATION CLOSER TO 12 DAYS INSTEAD OF 10?**

**A:** Isolation is, at minimum, 10 full days after a lab confirmed positive test or symptom onset. Isolation orders are only issued when 3 criteria have been met: 1) It has been at least 10 days from symptom onset (or positive lab result if person was asymptomatic the entire time), 2) No fever for at least 72 hours, and 3) any respiratory symptoms are improving. Due to the fact that all 3 criteria has to be met, your isolation end date can end up being very fluid. When looking at a calendar, we consider the date of symptom onset (or positive lab result if person was asymptomatic) to be day “0”. When looking at the example below (Chart B) the person started symptoms on a Monday, they had a fever and symptoms until Thursday. They were then fever/symptom free. We then count to ensure there is at least 72 hours without fever prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> day. Once 10 full days have passed, no fever within 72 hours, and all respiratory symptoms are at least getting better, the isolated patient may leave on the 11<sup>th</sup> day. Now if by the 10<sup>th</sup> day one or more of the criteria has not been met, the isolation period will be extended.

Chart B



**Q: HOW DO I GET RELEASED FROM ISOLATION?**

**A:** You will receive a phone call from either Park County Public Health contact tracers or Wyoming Department of Health epidemiologists to assess whether or not the 3 criteria for isolation release has been met. Once it has been, you will receive official paperwork releasing you from isolation.

Depending on the type of work you do (i.e. Healthcare), you may not be cleared to return to work at that point. However, that is between you and your employer. Once you have your release orders from the State of Wyoming, you are officially released from isolation from a Public Health standpoint.

**Q: HOW DO I GET RELEASED FROM QUARANTINE?**

**A:** If you complete your quarantine without developing symptoms you are free to leave your quarantine on the date that your quarantine paperwork specifies. You may not receive a phone call and you will not receive official paperwork releasing you.

If at any point during your quarantine period you do develop symptoms, you must call Park County Public Health. This may change your date of quarantine. It may even shorten it.

**Q: WHAT IF MY BOSS REQUIRES ME TO GET ANOTHER TEST BEFORE RETURNING TO WORK (AFTER COMPLETING MY ISOLATION/QUARANTINE)?**

**A:** We do not recommend this practice as we now know that people who have been infected with Covid-19 may still shed the virus for days, weeks, and possibly even months after they are no longer able to infect others. We also know that the PCR tests are so sensitive that they might pick up on these fragments of RNA virus. This can lead to a lot of confusion and fear about allowing staff to return to work. A repeat positive test will not result in a second isolation order from Public Health.

**Q: IF I BELIEVE I HAVE HAD COVID-19 BUT DID NOT GET TESTED, SHOULD I GET AN ANTIBODY TEST?**

**A:** There are many reasons why antibody testing is not recommended at this time. First, the reliability of available antibody testing is still questionable. These tests are also very expensive and not typically covered by insurance companies. The information given will not tell you when you had an active infection just that you did at some point. We still do not know if having had the virus once will protect you from getting it again and if so, for how long the antibodies even last. If and when this recommendation changes, we will announce it with another press release.

**Q: CAN I GIVE COVID-19 TO MY PETS?**

**A:** So far, all indications appear that it is difficult to transmit Covid-19 to household pets however not impossible. For much more detailed information and studies please visit the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) at:

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19/covid-19-faqs-pet-owners>

**Q: IS PARK COUNTY RUNNING OUT OF TESTING?**

**A:** No, both Cody Regional Health and Powell Valley Healthcare continue to offer drive up testing.

**Q: IF I AM IN QUARANTINE BUT DEVELOP SYMPTOMS, SHOULD I GO GET TESTED?**

**A:** No, if you are in quarantine and you develop symptoms you should call Public Health. Otherwise, a 14 day quarantine is as good, if not better, than a negative PCR test.

**Q: I HEARD THAT THE STATE IS INFLATING NUMBERS AND PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTUALLY QUARANTINED WERE RECEIVING ISOLATION ORDERS.**

**A:** The State of Wyoming is not inflating Covid-19 numbers. This was a human error at a local level with no intent for malice. It was brought to our attention and immediately fixed. Processes were since put into place to avoid this situation.