

FIND CLOSE CONTACTS & INSTRUCT QUARANTINE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

The South Heartland District Health Department needs your help to fight COVID-19. "Quarantine" of close contacts of someone with COVID-19 is one of the most significant things we can do to save lives. Because of growing numbers of cases throughout the state, we are no longer able to call every close contact of someone with COVID-19. We have identified that you have a positive COVID-19 laboratory test, or have illness that is consistent with COVID-19 and an exposure.

We need YOU to find all your close contacts and instruct them to self-quarantine.

1. Look at a calendar. Find the day you first became ill, or noticed something was off even if it was very mild (e.g. you felt overly fatigued, had a scratchy throat, etc.) This virus can spread 48 hours BEFORE illness. Record the day that is 48 hours before the day you first became ill.
 2. Go through each day on the calendar beginning 48 hours before the day you first became ill and ending 24 hours after you felt better. Record every person you came in "close contact" with. In general, close contact means people within 6 feet of you for about 15 or more minutes (e.g., sitting, standing, etc.) This may include household members, close friends, coworkers, and others who you've had prolonged contact with. *This does NOT include everyone you might have had contact with in passing (e.g., in a store, drive through window, or while jogging).*
 3. Contact each person you've potentially exposed to the virus and instruct them to **self-quarantine**. Read or send this letter to describe what this means. Briefly, self-quarantine should begin from the time you most recently had contact with that person. Self-quarantine means staying home, separated from others, for 14 days, while monitoring for illness. NOT everyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 will go on to develop COVID-19, but this is a precautionary measure that will limit additional spread IF that close contact becomes infected with the COVID-19 virus.
 4. IF one of your close contacts is a healthcare worker, or IF you learn that one of your close contacts is ill, instruct them to reach out to South Heartland District Health Department.
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- **Self-quarantine:** Persons with known or potential exposure to a person with COVID-19 infection should stay home and remove themselves from situations (for 14 days counting from most recent exposure) where others could be exposed/infected should they develop infection, and self-monitor to identify if COVID-19 infection develops.
 - **Self-isolate:** Persons who develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (including cough, shortness of breath, fever, sore throat, and fatigue) should eliminate contact with others as detailed above. An ill person can be "released from isolation" when it has been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND no fever for at least 24 hours (fever-free for 1 full day off fever-reducing medicine) AND all other symptoms have improved (e.g., cough has improved). If no symptoms, isolate for 10 days from the positive COVID test.

If I'm sick or if I've been exposed, what should I do to limit the risk of spreading COVID-19 infection to my family and other people in the community?

Stay home except to get medical care and separate yourself from others

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis. Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available. Limit contact with pets and animals. Although there haven't been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with the virus limit contact with animals until more is known.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask, if possible, when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately clean your hands as described below.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water and dried before use by others.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor for symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if you develop illness and if it is illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that your symptoms are consistent with COVID-19. Put on a facemask, if possible, before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting your infection.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

It is very important that you comply with this alert to self-quarantine. Your health and the health of others depends on it. Thank you for your cooperation and help during this public health emergency.