Potential COVID-19 Exposure Recommendations

If you have been exposed to COVID-19, or think you have been exposed, you can help prevent the spread of the virus to others. Please follow the guidance below.

Symptoms of COVID-19

Common symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include chills, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, vomiting, or diarrhea.

How do I know if I’ve been exposed to COVID-19?

You can be exposed to COVID-19 when you have been in direct contact with the secretions (droplets) of someone who has COVID-19 (being coughed or sneezed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.). People are often exposed to a household member or through close contact with another person. Close contact means that you have been within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more. Some people get COVID-19 without knowing how they were exposed.

If you are exposed to COVID-19, participate in a public health interview

RiverStone Health, Yellowstone County’s local public health agency, interviews all Yellowstone County residents who are diagnosed COVID-19. During the interview, the infected person is asked about who they have had close contact with (utilizing the definition described above) during the time that they would have been infectious. If you are identified as a close contact, RiverStone Health will call or text you. When you are contacted, you will be asked questions and be provided with information about what you should do. You will likely be asked to quarantine for 14 days. RiverStone Health will not tell you the name of the person who named you as a contact.

If you are not ill when you are interviewed, but become ill later, you should be tested for COVID-19. If you test positive, you will be asked to identify your close contacts during the time that you would have been infectious. You will be asked to provide their contact information so that they can be notified of their exposure. Your identity will not be shared with the people who are notified about their possible exposure.

I am a close contact of someone who has COVID-19, but I am not sick. What should I do?

You need to stay home and away from other people for 14 days. Do not go to work, school, grocery shopping or do other errands. For 14 days, beginning the last day that you had contact with the COVID-19 positive person, you will be asked to monitor yourself for fever, cough, shortness of breath and any other symptoms of COVID-19 (see list of symptoms listed above).

If I am told to quarantine for 14 days and have a negative COVID-19 test during that time, can I stop quarantining and go back to my daily activities?

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No, even if you have a negative test you must remain in quarantine until released by RiverStone Health.

**I am a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 and now I’m sick. What should I do?**

Now that you have COVID-19 symptoms, you should continue to stay home and away from other people, including household members, even if your symptoms are very mild. This is called self-isolation. Contact your healthcare provider about getting tested for COVID-19. Tell your provider you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 and are now sick. It is recommended that you get tested for COVID-19 if you are a close contact and become ill.

**How long do I need to be isolated?**

1. If you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 and have symptoms, you can end home isolation when:
   - It’s been at least 24 hours with no fever without using fever-reducing medication AND
   - Your symptoms have improved, AND at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

2. If you test positive for COVID-19, but have not had any symptoms, you can end home isolation when:
   - At least 10 days have passed since the date of your first positive COVID-19 test, AND
   - You have had no subsequent illness.


**What's the difference between isolation and quarantine?**

- **Isolation** is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms, or have tested positive for COVID-19. Isolation means staying home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time to avoid spreading illness.

- **Quarantine** is what you do if you have been exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine means staying home and away from others for a recommended period of time in case you are infected and could develop symptoms of the disease. You may also be able to spread the disease if you have been infected and do not have symptoms. Quarantine becomes isolation if you later test positive for COVID-19 or develop COVID-19 symptoms.


**Have more questions about COVID-19?**

If you have questions about COVID-19 home isolation, please call the RiverStone Health Public Health Information Line at 406.651.6415 and leave a message. Calls are returned on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact your healthcare provider.