Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19 and Local Tracing Efforts

Q: What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

A: Isolation orders are generally issued for people who are known to have a disease, while quarantine orders are intended for people who have been potentially exposed to a disease. I = Isolation, I = Ill.

Quarantine generally means a close contact that is not currently symptomatic. They need to remain in their home or on their property, but can be around other quarantined household members as long as they are not symptomatic. Anyone who is symptomatic should be away from ALL people. Quarantine lasts 14 full days which is the incubation period for COVID-19.

Isolation is for those who are lab confirmed positives or known close contacts (quarantines) who become ill or symptomatic. Isolated household members need to remain in their home or on their property and be separated from quarantined household members. Isolation lasts 10 full days as this is the length of time the virus is active.

In both cases, the quarantined or isolated persons should NOT go to the store, run errands, leave the property to hike, fish, camp, go four-wheeling, etc.

Q: What is a Close Contact?

A: The CDC Guidance has defined “Close Contact” as someone who:

- Was within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes
- Provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Had direct physical contact with the person (touched, hugged or kissed them)
- Shared eating or drinking utensils
- The infected person sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Being within 6 feet of someone for a prolonged period of time is the first rule of thumb to go by to start making that determination, however: if a known positive case was less than 2 feet within contact of someone for less than 15 minutes but they sneezed or coughed or got respiratory droplets on the other person, that person could still be considered a Close Contact. Contact tracers will ask questions until they can determine whether an interaction constitutes as a “close contact” or not.
Ideal social distancing means staying home as much as possible, keeping at least 6 feet away from people, not being nearer to people for over 10 minutes and both people wearing masks when you are close to someone. These social distancing guidelines (in conjunction with good hand hygiene and staying home when ill) are the best way to lower the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and may also keep you from needing to be quarantined if someone you interacted with tests positive.

Q: Will I be notified if I need to go into Isolation or 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 the test. They will alert you that you have tested positive and that you must stay home, isolate, and wait for a phone call from the Public Health contact tracers.

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. When the contact tracer calls you, they will interview you, and then issue you official isolation or quarantine orders.

Q: Why is my quarantine date closer to 16 days instead of 14?

A: A quarantine period must last 14 FULL days as the virus can take up to 14 days to fully develop in the body. If you were at work with someone (who later tested positive for COVID-19) on Tuesday, Tuesday would be considered your day 0. Then 14 full days are counted for the quarantine period and you are officially released the 15th day.

CHART A:

Take a look at some other examples here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html
Q: Why is my isolation date closer to 12 days instead of 10?

A: Isolation is a minimum of 10 FULL days after a lab confirmed positive test or symptom onset. Isolations orders are lifted when 1) It has been at least 10 days from symptom onset or positive lab result if the person was asymptomatic, 2) No fever for 24 hours; 3) any respiratory symptoms are improving. Because all three criteria have to be met, the isolation end date can be fluid. The date of symptom onset (or positive lab result) is day 0. The tracer then counts to ensure there is at least 24 hours without fever prior to the 10th day. Once 10 full days have passed, there has been no fever reported for 24 hours, and all respiratory symptoms are at least getting better, the isolated patient can leave isolation on the 11th day. If by the 10th day one or more of the criteria has not been met, the isolation period will be extended.

In the example shown on Chart B, the person started symptoms on a Monday, had fever and symptoms until Thursday. They were then fever/symptom free. 24 hours are counted to make sure there was no fever during that period of time prior to the 10th day.

CHART B:

Please look at the CDC’s guidelines for isolating if you are sick: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html

If you receive a personal public health order it is important to follow the requirements. Isolation and quarantine orders are one of our most important strategies to help limit the spread of a disease and to help prevent the infection of vulnerable individuals.
Q: How do I get released from Isolation?

A: You will receive a phone call from either a Public Health contact tracer or the Wyoming Department of Health epidemiologists to assess whether or not the 3 criteria for isolation release has been met. Once it has, you will receive an official isolation release letter. One you have your orders, 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 order paperwork specifies. You may not receive a phone call and you will not receive any official paperwork releasing you.

If at any point during quarantine period you DO develop symptoms, you MUST call Public Health. This can change the date of your 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: This practice is not recommended because it is now known 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. 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: Antibody testing is not recommended at this time. The reliability of available antibody testing is still questionable. 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 antibodies even last. If and when this recommendation changes, it will be announced.

Q: I have been in contact with people who are now on quarantine, what do I do?

A: It is a good idea to practice extra precaution as far as distancing and preventive strategies (wearing a mask, and avoiding close contact with others,) and to keep a close eye to see if you develop symptoms, but the risk for exposure is low enough that you’ll not be required to quarantine. Those who have had close, prolonged contact with a person who tests positive are asked to quarantine, but the contacts of those contacts are not required to quarantine.
Q: If I was exposed to someone who tested positive, and I get tested for COVID-19 and it is negative, do I still need to stay home and quarantine?

A: A negative test doesn’t mean you’re done with quarantine. Because of the length of the incubation period of COVID-19, at any time during the 14 days after exposure the virus could replicate enough to result in an infection. It could take the whole time, or it could happen in a short time. A negative test today doesn’t mean that you won’t test positive in a few days. So, even if you are tested for COVID and it comes back negative, you may still develop symptoms within those 14 days, and therefore, you must remain quarantined.

When you test negative, it means you did not have enough COVID-19 virus present in your body to test positive at the time of the test, but that does not mean you won’t develop symptoms or become sick. There is always a chance that you received a false negative as well.

Q: Can I give COVID-19 to my pets?

A: Studies are showing that it appears to be difficult to transmit COVID-19 to household pets however it is not impossible. Please visit the resources below for more information on animals and COVID-19.


Q: Is Lincoln County running out of tests?

A: Not at this time.

Q: If I am in quarantine but develop symptoms, should I get tested?

A: If you are in quarantine and develop symptoms, call Public Health or your Healthcare Provider.