Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Guidance for Quarantining at Home Following Potential Exposure to COVID-19

You are being contacted because you have likely been exposed to COVID-19. There are actions you need to take to care for yourself and to help prevent spreading the coronavirus to others.

It's important to know that although you may not feel sick, you may have the coronavirus, and you could pass it along to others. **Starting immediately, it is very important for you to separate yourself for the next 14 days from other people.** You should do this at home. This will help avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Please be aware that during your home quarantine, representatives of your local health department will be available to you.

The reason it's so important for you to quarantine at home is because COVID-19 spreads easily and can be very dangerous. COVID-19 spreads from an infected person through respiratory secretions (mucous and droplets from coughs), sneezes, laughing, singing and talking. It can cause serious illness such as pneumonia, stroke, organ failure and in some rare cases, death.

Hundreds of Kentuckians who have contracted COVID-19 have recovered from it, and many report experiencing mild symptoms or not noticing any symptoms. However, it's important to keep in mind that COVID-19 is a very serious virus, and this is why it's important for you to do certain things and to avoid doing certain other things for the next 14 days or until your local health department representative tells you it's safe to stop quarantining at home.

Guidelines for Safely Quarantining at Home

Take your temperature once a day and record it. Your local health department representative will check in with you about this and about your general well-being.

Stay home except to get medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas and do not use public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis. Get rest and stay hydrated.

Separate yourself from other people in your home. As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home. You should use a separate bathroom, if available. Do not have visitors in your home.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor. Before any medical appointment, call the health care provider and tell them that you are being monitored for COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people from potentially being exposed.

Wear a cloth covering over your nose and mouth. You should wear a cloth face covering over your mouth and nose if you must be around other people. If you can't put on a cloth face covering, limit your time in the same room as others and cover your coughs and sneezes in some other way. Do not use face coverings or masks on children under the age of 2 years old.

Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or

sneeze or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Wash your hands. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing household items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day. High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables.

Monitor your symptoms. Notify your health care provider and your local health department if you develop symptoms. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees), cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, stiff or sore muscles, or new loss of taste or smell.

Seek immediate medical attention if you have any of these emergency warning signs for COVID-19: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to rouse, and/or bluish lips or face. Call 9-1-1 if you have a medical emergency and notify the operator that you think you might have COVID-19. If you are able, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

Remain quarantined for as long as local health department officials tell you. Again, you will be required to quarantine for 14 days from your last exposure to COVID-19, unless public health officials tell you otherwise. The officials will let you when you can end your self-quarantine.

Prevention Steps for Caregivers and Household Members

If you live with or provide care at home for a person being monitored for COVID-19:

- When possible, you should not be a caregiver if you are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. People at higher risk include people over 60 years of age and those who have compromised immune systems or chronic health conditions, such as chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes. Keep these people away from the quarantined person.
- There should be no visitors to the home unless they are essential for providing care for the person.
- Other household members should stay in another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, they should stay in another room or be separated from the person as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available. If you have to share space, make sure the room has good air flow. Eat in separate rooms or areas.
- The quarantined person should wear a cloth face covering when they are around other people. The caregiver should wear gloves when in contact with the quarantined person's blood, stool, or other body fluids. The caregiver should also wear a cloth face covering when in the same room as the quarantined person.
- Make sure that you understand and can help the person follow the health care provider's instructions for medication and care. You should help the person with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, electronics (like a cell phone), or other items with a person who is being monitored for COVID-19. After the person uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see below "Wash laundry thoroughly").
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables every day.
    - Read labels of cleaning products and follow recommendations provided on product labels. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning products including precautions you should take when applying the product.
    - You may also use a diluted bleach solution or a household disinfectant with a label that says "EPA-approved." To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water. Use a freshly made bleach solution each day, if commercial products are unavailable.
    - If you are using a separate bedroom and bathroom: Only clean the area around the person who is quarantined when needed, such as when the area is soiled. This will help limit your contact with the quarantined person. If they feel up to it, the person who is quarantined can clean their own space. Give the person who is quarantined personal cleaning supplies.
    - If sharing a bathroom: The person who is quarantined should clean and then disinfect after each use. If this is not possible, wear a mask and wait as long as possible after the quarantined person has used the bathroom before coming in to clean and use the bathroom.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
    - Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them.
    - Do not shake laundry.
    - Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and wash your

hands immediately after removing your gloves.
    - Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, wash and dry with the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
- Use a lined trash can. Place disposable gloves and other contaminated items in lined trash can. Use gloves when removing garbage bags and wash hands immediately after.
- Monitor the quarantined person's symptoms. If they develop a fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees), respiratory symptoms or shortness of breath, call their health care provider and tell them that is person is being monitored for COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to limit potential exposure.
- Track your own health. Take your temperature once a day. Monitor yourself for symptoms including fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees), cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chills, stiff or sore muscles, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell. **If you or anyone in your household develops any of these symptoms, contact your healthcare provider immediately.**
- Discuss any additional questions with your health care provider or local health department.

Remember that your local health department representatives are there to help if you have questions or concerns. You may also visit the Kentucky Department for Public Health website, or you may call us at the COVID-19 Hotline (800) 722-5725. For additional information on COVID-19, visit **kycovid.19.ky.gov**.

Thank you for doing your part to care for yourself and to help prevent further spread of COVID-19.

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