



Public Health
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**Peoria City/County
Health Department**

Media Release

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To: All Media

From: Peoria City/County Health Department
2116 N. Sheridan Road
Peoria, Illinois 61604

Contact: Diana Scott

Phone: 309/679-6603

For Immediate Release

Understanding COVID-19 Investigations

Peoria - A key part of our community's COVID-19 response is the work of public health departments. Public Health disease specialists conduct investigations for positive or suspect cases of COVID-19.

These investigations, called contact tracing, begin when healthcare providers, individuals, or other health departments notify your local health department of a confirmed case or contact. The process includes an extensive interview that includes determining when exposure occurred, assessing the risk, reviewing any symptoms, and understanding the person's medical and occupational history.

As a precaution, those individuals under contact tracing, are initially requested to self-quarantine or self-isolate, to minimize possible transmission to others during the contact tracing period. Working with the person's healthcare provider, the local health department will determine the need for testing.

During contact tracing, other individuals may be identified as "contacts of a contact". These would be persons that may work with someone who lives with a positive COVID-19 case. Depending on the exposure and risk, oftentimes the health department will to ask those contacts of a contact to self-monitor their symptoms, but not necessarily self-quarantine.

**It is important to note, that as this virus spreads,
the focus in our community should *not* be whether you have been exposed,
but rather *assume you have been exposed to COVID-19*
and take measures to decrease the transmission to others.**

Below are frequently asked questions about contract tracing:

How will I be notified if I've been exposed to a positive case of COVID-19?

If you have been identified as a medium or high risk contact of a positive case of COVID-19, your local health department will reach out to begin the contract tracing process with you. This may be as specific as a direct call or may be a larger request for individuals that have attended activities or locations during a particular time period. The effectiveness of these investigations relies on the cooperation of all those involved. Those individuals identified as low risk should continue the self-monitoring that we ask the general public to do – check yourself for symptoms, stay home if you are sick, and practice social distancing.

(more)

What are the risk levels for exposure?

There are three levels of risk in regard to contact tracing. Those individuals who are high or medium risk, often have a prolonged exposure to the positive case. This includes sharing a household or spending a lot of time in close, confined space of each other, usually less than 6 feet. Those who are low risk have a brief encounter, may have had personal protective equipment (PPE), or been in a shared general area.

Do all risk levels get tested?

Not all risk levels require testing. Those individuals that are low risk, should self-monitor their symptoms and practice social distancing as the general public has already been requested to do. Those that are medium or high risk may be asked to test, based on additional risk factors or understanding the type of contact they have had. An example would be a spouse of a positive COVID-19 case would be asked to self-quarantine; and then if they started having symptoms would not necessarily be tested, but rather be assumed to also have the virus.

What should I do if I think I've been in contact or exposed?

If you think you have been in contact or exposed to an individual, self-quarantine and call a healthcare provider to discuss your exposure and symptoms. Not all individuals that have been exposed to COVID-19 will need to be tested.

Should I be tested?

Not everyone should be tested for COVID-19. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Call your healthcare provider to assess the need for you to be tested.

Three things to remember:

- Most individuals will have mild symptoms and, as with other illness, should stay at home, use fever-reducing medications, drink plenty of fluids, and rest. They should contact their healthcare provider if their symptoms worsen.
- Testing may not be requested for all individuals. Contact your healthcare provider to determine if you should be tested.
- Regardless of your exposure, the public should practice social distancing, good hygiene, monitor for symptoms, and stay home when sick. These practices decrease the speed of transmission in our community, allowing our healthcare providers, high risk populations, and community to be safe.

We appreciate your patience and understanding during this stressful time as we work diligently to slow the spread of COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 and other public health updates, visit the Peoria City/County Health Department website at www.pcchd.org/COVID19 .

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The Peoria City/County Health Department continues efforts to improve community health in Peoria County with the overarching goal ***“to increase the number of people who are healthy at every stage of life.”***