

Close Contacts of Persons with Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

21 June 2020

Via Email or Regular US Mail, or Both

Dear Ms.:

The Secretary of Health is directing you as a close contact of a person that has COVID-19 to self-quarantine in your home. A “close contact” is defined as either being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time (close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case), or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (*e.g.*, being coughed on).

COVID-19 is a disease that is capable of rapidly spreading person-to-person. If someone is infected, that person is capable of exposing other people to COVID-19, even if they have no symptoms. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. Older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions are at a higher risk for serious illness. Early symptoms may also include chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose.

COVID-19 is a threat to the public’s health, for which the Secretary of Health may order general control measures, including, but not limited to, quarantine. This authority is granted to the Secretary of Health under the law. (Sections 5 and 7 of the Disease Prevention and Control Law, sections 2102 and 2106 of the Administrative Code of 1929, and the Department of Health’s (Department) regulations found at 28 Pa. Code §§ 27.60-27.68 (relating to disease control measures; isolation; quarantine; movement of persons subject to isolation or quarantine; and release from isolation and quarantine)).

If your exposure to the person with COVID-19 is ongoing, you must self-quarantine in your home for 14 days after the person with COVID-19 is released from isolation. If you do not live in the same household as the person with COVID-19, you must remain in quarantine in your home for 14 days from the date of last contact with the person with COVID-19.

If you do not have any symptoms and are a life-sustaining business worker, or a health care worker, you may be permitted to leave your home only to continue work, provided you remain asymptomatic, crisis circumstances require that you continue to work, and you adhere to the following practices: 1) measure your temperature and assess

symptoms prior to starting work; 2) wear a mask at all times while in the workplace; and 3) maintain 6 feet between self and others and practice social distancing as your work duties permit. If you become sick while working, you shall return home immediately.

You are directed to do the following while in quarantine:

1. Take your temperature twice daily.
2. Watch for other symptoms of COVID-19 (including fever (a body temperature of 100.4°F/38°C or higher), cough, shortness of breath, chills, body aches, sore throat, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose).
3. Immediately report any of symptoms requiring medical attention to the Department if they develop (see number below), and contact your health care provider, but make sure to tell them you are a close contact or household contact of a person with COVID-19.
4. Do not travel or leave the place to which you have been quarantined, unless you are a life-sustaining business worker or a health care worker adhering to the above-mentioned requirements, in which case you may travel to your place of work only.
5. Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from family members.
6. Do the following:
 - a. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
 - b. Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, do not use your hands.
 - c. Clean surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, and other frequently touched items.
7. Cooperate with the monitoring and other contacts of the Department or its representatives.
8. Be aware of any persons in your home who may be particularly likely to get COVID-19, like those who are elderly, or who are immunocompromised, for example, someone who has cancer and is taking chemotherapy, or who may have another condition or illness, like diabetes or asthma. Be careful to practice social distancing around those persons.

If family members develop symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, and runny nose), or symptoms worsen, you or they should notify the Department immediately at 1-877-724-3258 and contact your health care provider. Before seeking medical attention for yourself or your family, you or your family should let your health care provider know that you have been in contact with a person with COVID-19.

You must immediately adhere to this quarantine directive and all disease control measures included in it. If you do not cooperate with this directive, the Secretary of Health may petition a court to have you confined to an appropriate place chosen by the Department to make certain that you are not able to infect the public, and to make certain that you receive proper care. This may be a hospital, or some other appropriate place, whichever the Department determines is best suited for your case. You will be kept there until the Department determines it can release you from quarantine. Law enforcement may be called upon, to the extent necessary, to ensure your compliance with this directive. Please feel free to contact the Department about the content of this directive at 1-877-724-3258.

The Department is concerned about the health and well-being of you, your family and the general public during this outbreak. We understand that this is a difficult time, and that some individuals may need additional support during this period. Please reach out to us if you or your family need assistance by contacting the Department at 1-877-724-3258.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RL 22 MD', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Rachel Levine, MD
Secretary of Health