Vilas County Public Health Department

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For Immediate Release: September 30, 2019
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Vilas County Public Health Department Q&A, Part 3

Vilas County is continuing to experience a surge in new cases of COVID-19. Vilas County Public Health Department is responding to new cases and close contacts as soon as we are able to. Because our department is operating at full capacity, our response time may be delayed. In order to increase our capacity to notify and contract trace in a timely manner, we are working with our partners and the WI Department of Health Services. Below are questions that we receive on a regular basis while following up with new cases and close contacts.

1. What is the difference between Isolation and Quarantine?

Isolation keeps a person who tested positive for COVID-19 away from others, even in their own home. The person may be showing symptoms, but may also be symptom free.

If you test positive for COVID-19 or think you have the disease you should isolate in your home, away from others until:
• At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared and
• You have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and
• Other symptoms have improved.

If you test positive for COVID-19, but do not have symptoms, you should still isolate in your home, away from others:
• Stay home until after 10 days have passed since your positive test.

Note: If you live with others, stay in a specific "sick room" or area and away from other people or animals, including pets. Use a separate bathroom, if available.

Quarantine keeps a person who was a close contact to someone who has COVID-19 away from others. It can take up to 14 days for a person who was exposed to develop symptoms. Quarantining while you are not sick allows you to limit the number of people you have contact with in the event you become ill.

If you had close contact with a person who has COVID-19:

• Stay home until 14 days after your last contact.

• Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.

• If possible, stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

2. I think I was exposed to someone who tested positive or is having symptoms of COVID-19, now what?

• Monitor yourself for symptoms like fever, cough, runny nose, headache, shortness of breath, and loss of taste or smell.

• If you develop any symptoms, call your healthcare provider for further instruction.

• If you are considered a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19, the local health department will contact you for further instructions.

3. How do I know if I am a close contact to COVID-19?

You are a close contact if any of the following situations happened while you spent time with the person with COVID-19, even if they didn't have symptoms:

• Had direct physical contact with the person (for example, a hug, kiss, or handshake).

• Were within 6 feet of the person for a total of more than 15 minutes in a single day.

• Had contact with the person's respiratory secretions (for example, coughed or sneezed on; contact with a dirty tissue; shared a drinking glass, food, towels, or other personal items).

• Live with the person or stayed overnight for at least one night in a household with the person.

4. If my friend or family member has been exposed to COVID-19, am I exposed?

Just because someone you know was exposed doesn't mean you were. If you are healthy and your friend or family member did not have any symptoms, you do not have to get tested, self-quarantine or take any special precautions.

5. I understand if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 I need to quarantine for 14 days. If I get tested, and it is negative, can I get out of quarantine?

It is important to know that one negative test after finding out you are a close contact doesn't mean you are not going to get COVID-19. This is because it can take up to 14 days for you to become sick after being exposed to the virus. A negative test does not mean you do not have COVID-19, unless it is completed on the 14th day of your quarantine.

6. I am diagnosed with COVID-19. Should I tell all my friends to go get tested?

The person who is recently diagnosed should wait until they get a call from the health department so we can assist you in identifying who was exposed and who wasn't. Calling friends and close contacts may cause unnecessary panic and worry. The local health department will follow up with identified close contacts to ensure they are quarantined for 14 days and monitoring their symptoms closely.

Please follow the preventive steps below to protect yourself, your family, neighbors, and the rest of the community:
• Avoiding social gatherings of any size, with people of all ages who do not live together (including playdates and sleepovers, parties, large family dinners, visitors and non-essential workers in your house);
• Practicing physical distancing when out in public by staying 6 feet away from others;
• Wear cloth face coverings;
• Taking special precautions to protect high-risk individuals;
• Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water;
• Covering coughs and sneezes (into the sleeve, elbow, or tissue, and not hands);
• Regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces;
• Not shaking hands;
• Avoiding touching your face; and
• Staying at home as much as possible, avoid travel outside of your community.

For more information, please visit Vilas County Public Health Department's website at health.vilascountywi.gov

Source: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm

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