



## Contact Tracing FAQs Updated 12/4/20

### **What is contact tracing?**

Contact tracing is a process when public health staff work with a COVID-19 patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they may have been infectious.

#### Close Contact:

Is defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient was isolated.

### **What happens during contact tracing?**

Generally, contact tracing includes the following steps:

- Case Investigation: Public health staff work with a patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they may have been infectious.
- Contact Tracing: Public health staff begin contact tracing by notifying exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.
- Contact Support: Contacts are provided with education, information, and support to help them understand their risk, what they should do to separate themselves from others who are not exposed, and how to monitor themselves for illness.
- Self-quarantine: Contacts are instructed to stay home, monitor their health, and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until their monitoring period is over, in case they also become ill. Close contacts may also be referred to receive COVID-19 testing.



### **What are close contacts expected to do?**

Close contacts are instructed to stay at home and self-quarantine for the duration of their monitoring period.

For people who are identified as a close contact without symptoms, quarantine can end:

- On day 10 without testing.
- On day 7 after receiving a negative test result. The individual must be tested on day 5 of quarantine or later.

After stopping quarantine, people should:

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their healthcare provider.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Please note that close contacts can only receive proof of their test results directly from the testing facility. The Flathead City-County Health Department cannot provide or verify negative test results at this time.

### **What if I have been around someone who is identified as a close contact?**

If you have been around someone who was identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19, but you were not in direct contact with the positive case, you do not need to self-quarantine. Monitor yourself for symptoms and continue to practice general social distance and hygiene precautions.

### **What happens to personal information during contact tracing?**

Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private and only shared with those who may need to know, like your health care provider.

Names will not be revealed to close contacts. The health department will only notify close contacts that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Contact-Tracing>