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Town of Abington

COVID-19 Follow Up Frequently Asked Questions

My name is Lindsay Wright. I am the public health nurse for the town of Abington. I wanted to take a minute and introduce myself. I also wanted to take the opportunity to explain what it is I do in regards to COVID-19 follow up and wanted to explain several scenarios that could arise related to COVID-19 what you can expect if any of them occur.

When a resident of Abington tests positive, the positive lab result is sent to an electronic reporting system that Massachusetts uses. The information comes from the information that is collected when you are tested. A positive lab result sends an email to me alerting me to the result. When I get that email, I call the positive case, either from the office phone number (781-982-2119) if I am in the office or my cell phone which will come up as a blocked number, if I am at home. When I call, we will talk about why you were tested (travel, pre-procedure, symptoms, etc.) and talk about the isolation period. We will also talk about close contacts you were around while infectious. If you have an email address, I will send you an email that includes all the information we talked about on the phone, isolation guidelines and if needed a work note. If you do not have an email address, I will mail the information to your home.

Below are several frequently asked questions I get in regards to COVID-19. I hope this helps answer any questions you may have. Of course, if you have any other questions please feel free to reach out and ask!

What is a close contact?

A close contact is defined as anyone who has been within 6 feet of a positive case for greater than 15 minutes, wearing a mask or not.

How will I know if I am a close contact?

You will get a phone call from me stating you have been named as a close contact to a positive case of COVID-19. It is important to note that during this call, I can only tell you that you have been “potentially exposed to COVID-19 on X Date.” Due to privacy laws, I cannot provide a name of who you could have been exposed by.

What does it mean if I am a close contact?

If you are listed as a close contact, the health department will ask that you quarantine 14 days from the last date of exposure, and we start counting the day after your last exposure. You can return to your usual routine after this quarantine period is over, and as long as you remained asymptomatic and tested negative. It is also important to note that a negative test does not end the quarantine period early.

Example: Last Date of Exposure: 9/1/2020

Quarantine Period: 9/2/2020-9/15/2020

Return to work: 9/16/2020

I am a close contact and have been asked to quarantine, does the rest of my family need to quarantine as well?

If you are listed as a close contact of a positive case and asked to quarantine, the rest of your household and your contacts do not need to quarantine. They would only need to quarantine if you became symptomatic or tested positive.

A family member of mine tested positive, when can I return to my usual routine?

The household contact of a positive case can return to their usual routine when they have quarantined through the positive cases isolation period (typically 10 days, but can be longer if they continue to have significant symptoms or a persistent fever), plus their own 14-day quarantine period. A positive case is considered infectious through the end of their isolation period. Then the official 14-day quarantine period begins. It can up to 14 days for the virus to show itself which is why contacts are asked to quarantine for that length of time after the last day they are exposed. The household contacts spend a significantly longer amount of time in quarantine where their exposure is ongoing until the last day of the positive cases isolation period.

Example: Household Member's Positive Cases Isolation Period: 9/1/2020-9/10/2020

Quarantine Period of household contact: 9/1/2020-9/24/2020

Return to usual routine: 9/25/2020

A second (or third, fourth, etc.) family member of my family tested positive, when can I return to my usual routine?

The household contact of a positive case can return to their usual routine when they have quarantined through the positive cases isolation periods, plus their own 14-day quarantine period. The length of the quarantine is lengthened each time a new member of the household tests positive to reflect the new cases release of isolation date, plus the 14-day quarantine period for the household contact.

Example: Household Member's Positive Cases Isolation Period: 9/1/2020-9/10/2020

A second household Positive Cases Isolation Period: 9/8/2020-9/17/2020

Quarantine Period of household contact: 9/1/2020-10/1/2020

Return to usual routine: 10/2/2020

If a third tested positive:

Third household Positive Cases isolation period: 9/14/2020-9/23/2020

Quarantine Period of household contact: 9/1/2020-10/7/2020

Return to usual routine: 10/8/2020

It would continue this way with each subsequent positive case extending the time for those in quarantine.

If there are any other questions please reach out and ask!

Thank you,

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