IDPH
ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

What to do if you were potentially exposed to someone with confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

If you think you have been exposed to someone with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, follow the steps below to monitor your health and to avoid spreading the disease to others if you get sick.

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2. The most common symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild disease but some people will get sicker and may need to be hospitalized.

How do I know if I was exposed?

You generally need to be in close contact with a person with COVID-19 to get infected. Close contact includes:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 10 minutes, OR
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).

If you have not been in **close contact** with a sick person with COVID-19, you are considered to be at low, but not zero risk for infection. Cases of COVID-19 do occur due to community spread. That is why hand hygiene and social distancing are important prevention measures.

If you have been exposed to a person with COVID-19, you can continue to go to work and school but should monitor your health for 14 days and stay away from others if you get sick.

What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 but am not sick?

You should monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath for 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the person with COVID-19. You should not go to work or school, and should avoid public places during this period. If you live with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, please see additional guidance for how to care safely for ill persons:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html

What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?

If you get sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath (even if your symptoms are very mild), you should stay at home and away from other people for 14 days. If you are over the age of 60 years, are pregnant, or have medical conditions you may be at higher risk of COVID-19 complications. Contact your physician's office and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for influenza and COVID-19. For additional information see IDPH guidance document titled: What to do if you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for additional information.

If you do not have a higher risk condition but want medical advice, you can call your healthcare provider and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Your healthcare provider can help you decide if you need to be

evaluated in person. There are currently no medications to treat COVID-19 and having a test will not change the advice to stay home for 14-days or 72-hours after your fever has gone away and your symptoms are improving, **whichever is longer**.

Can the IDPH COVID-19 hotline help me to get tested for COVID-19?

The IDPH COVID-19 hotline does not assist residents with getting tested and does not make decisions about who should be tested. Please do not contact the COVID-19 hotline for issues related to COVID-testing. These decisions are made by health care providers.

Can a health department help me to get tested for COVID-19?

Health departments do not order COVID-19 tests. Testing is done by health care providers who evaluate patients individually and decide whether testing is needed.

If you need immediate medical attention

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you may have been exposed to COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive or immediately after they arrive.