

Contact Tracing for COVID-19

What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing helps stop disease outbreaks by:

1. Notifying the close contacts that they have been exposed to COVID-19 and providing them with instructions for quarantine.
2. Enrolling individuals in contact tracing (Sara Alert™) for symptom monitoring.

Who is a close contact?

Any person who was within 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more.

Who does contact tracing?

In Maine, contact tracing is done by staff at Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) and in collaboration with other facilities.

Why it matters?

Contact tracing informs people of their COVID-19 exposures. People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are more likely to be infected.

Through contact tracing, Maine CDC can quickly identify people who develop symptoms and make recommendation for testing and isolation.

Why do contact tracing?

Some people may show few or no symptoms, but they can still spread the virus to others without knowing it.

For others, COVID-19 can cause serious illness or death, especially in older adults and people with existing health conditions.

How are contacts identified:

Maine CDC identifies contacts through case investigation of confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases. The investigator collects information on close contacts that is provided to the contact tracing team.

How does contact tracing work?

1. Contact tracing enrollers call individuals identified through case investigation to:
 - a. Inform them of the close contact with someone with COVID-19.
 - b. Enroll them in contact tracing for daily symptom checks.
 - c. Provide information on quarantining.
 - d. Offer a letter for an employer stating they have been asked to quarantine.
 - e. Help connect to social services to provide support while in quarantine.

*Maine CDC will not say who identified them as a close contact.

What is Sara Alert™

Maine CDC uses Sara Alert™, a web-based tool, to help monitor symptoms for COVID-19 close contacts. People who may have been exposed to COVID-19 can report symptoms through web, text, email, or automated call. People enrolled in Sara Alert™ get messages each day to report if they have COVID-19 symptoms. This quickly identifies if people exposed to COVID-19 become ill so Maine CDC can give guidance to anyone reporting symptoms.

Learn more about Sara Alert™ at www.saraalert.org.

How do I know it is Maine CDC calling and not a hoax?

Maine CDC **will NOT** ask for bank account information, your social security number, or immigration status.

Is there anyone else from Maine CDC who may call me?

If you or others in your house are close contacts and begin to have symptoms, a case investigator will call.

About your privacy

If Maine CDC calls, they will ask for your name, address, and date of birth. This helps make sure Maine CDC can identify individuals and not confuse a person with someone that has a similar name, address, or age. This information is kept private, just like a like a medical record.

Information that goes in the Sara Alert™ system includes date of birth and address. It is deleted 14 days after you end quarantine or isolation. You may request your data not go in the Sara Alert™ system. If you request to not share the information, the team will continue to monitor you without messages from Sara Alert™. You can also choose not to answer questions that make you uncomfortable.

Language Access

Interpreters are available by request. Maine CDC works with cultural brokers to ensure cultural and linguistic needs are met.

