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## Maine Health Alert Network (HAN) System

# PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

**To:** Health Care, City/County Health  
**From:** Dr. Siiri Bennett, State Epidemiologist  
**Subject:** Changes to Maine CDC's Quarantine Policy  
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## CHANGES TO MAINE CDC'S QUARANTINE POLICY

**Summary:** On December 2, 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") released a Scientific Brief on [Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing](#), based on a review of new epidemiological and modeling data.

As noted in this Scientific Brief, local public health authorities determine and establish the quarantine options for their jurisdictions. Based on recent modeling and local circumstances and resources, U.S. CDC has provided data on options to shorten the previous 14-day quarantine period. **Considering these data, Maine CDC is changing the quarantine period for individuals known to be close contacts of cases of COVID-19 to 10 days.** It is important to note that a shorter quarantine period carries a risk that an exposed individual could become positive and potentially transmit COVID-19 to others after quarantine.

### MAINE PLAN

In light of the U.S. CDC's analysis, Maine CDC is updating its recommendations for quarantine as follows:

- On a going-forward basis, all close contacts of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 must stay home (self-quarantine) for **10 days** from the time of their last exposure.
- Maine CDC continues to recommend a COVID-19 test between days 5 and 7 to identify new infections as soon as possible, though a negative test will **not** change the duration of the 10-day quarantine period.
- All individuals in quarantine should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 for **14 days**.
- While a 14-day quarantine period is still epidemiologically preferable, a 10-day period may increase compliance with quarantine requirements. However, use of a 10-day quarantine period (as compared to a 14-day period) does introduce an additional marginal risk for transmission of COVID-19 after individuals have left quarantine.

- According to the U.S. CDC’s Scientific Brief, ending the quarantine period after 10 days without a negative PCR test results in a median residual post-quarantine transmission risk of 1.4% (range: 0.1-10.6%). With a negative PCR test, the median residual post-quarantine transmission risk is 0.3% (range: 0.0-2.4%).
- The 10-day quarantine period will apply to individuals who are at heightened risk for COVID-19 or who work in high-risk or congregate living settings. However, the decision to adhere to a 10-day window or to continue using a 14-day quarantine period is up to the facility or organization.

### ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- **The date of last exposure to a positive person determines when the 10-day quarantine period can begin.**
- Use of the 10-day quarantine option presumes, per U.S. CDC guidelines, that individuals remain asymptomatic through day 14 after exposure. Individuals who develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should immediately self-isolate, contact their health care provider, and seek testing.
- All individuals leaving quarantine after day 10 should continue to use face coverings or masks and practice physical distancing.
- Employees of long-term care or congregate settings should continue to use standard PPE and follow institutional policies.

The full text of the U.S. CDC Options to Reduce Quarantine can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

### DEFINITIONS

**Isolation** refers to the separation of a person from others for a designated period of time because that person 1) is infected with the COVID-19 virus and has tested positive, or 2) is probably infected because they are a close contact of a confirmed case and have symptoms, though they may not have been tested. For most individuals with COVID-19 infection, that period is 10 days or more, depending on resolution of symptoms.

**Quarantine** refers to the separation of a person from others for a designated period of time because that person may have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus but is not currently symptomatic. There is the chance that the person exposed may develop COVID-19 infection in the 14 days following exposure and could infect others. Quarantine starts from date of the person’s last exposure to the individual with COVID-19. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they have the virus.

For both self-quarantine and self-isolation:

- Stay home.
- Do not go to public places even for essential reasons, including grocery stores. Plan to have enough food available or arrange to have it delivered to you to complete your quarantine/isolation.
- Do not use public transportation including buses, trains, planes, taxis, Lyft/Uber, etc.
- Do not have visitors in your home.
- Keep a distance of at least 6 feet from other people.

**A Close contact** is someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. All close contacts

- Must quarantine (stay home) for 10 days from the last day of their exposure to the person with COVID-19.
- Should get tested for COVID-19 5-7 days after exposure to the infected person even if they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Testing for COVID-19 during quarantine helps identify infection early when someone may be infected but still asymptomatic and can help stop further spread of the virus, but a negative test does NOT allow a person to end quarantine early.

## Symptoms

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.