

Additional Guidance for Patients After a Known Exposure to SARS-CoV-2

DATE:	11/17/2020
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Additional Factors to Determine Close Contacts of Persons with COVID-19
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	n/a
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory”, provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

- If someone is identified as a close contact to a person with COVID, the close contact must quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact.
- There is no recognized “presumed positive” case definition for COVID-19.
- Household contacts of COVID-19 cases who cannot isolate themselves must quarantine for 14 days after the case’s infectious period ends.

This Health Update provides recommendations and testing considerations for people suspected of having SARS-CoV-2 infection. Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) provides this guidance based on available information about COVID-19 and is subject to change.

This guidance is intended to provide clarification to the information contained in [PA-HAN-525](#). Patients who have been identified as a close contact to a person with SARS-CoV-2 must quarantine for 14 days after the last known contact.

Cases of COVID-19 are categorized into either [confirmed or probable cases](#).

- A **confirmed** case is defined as a person who meets confirmatory laboratory evidence (e.g., detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA in a clinical specimen using a molecular amplification test).
- A **probable** case is defined as a person who either
 - A) meets clinical criteria AND has epidemiological linkage with no confirmatory lab testing for SARS-CoV-2; OR
 - B) tests positive for SARS-CoV-2 via antigen test in a respiratory specimen.

Please note, there is **no** recognized “presumed positive” case definition for COVID-19.

Per [PA-HAN-527](#), DOH recommends all individuals who are close contacts of COVID-19 cases should get tested. If a close contact is not tested, they should continue to follow all guidance for close contacts which means remaining in quarantine for 14 days after the last known contact. Isolation criteria should not be applied to those who do not meet the confirmed or probable case definition for COVID-19. A negative test result while a close contact is under quarantine does not release the person from quarantine.

Patients with COVID-19 who live with others should, where possible, self-isolate in a private room and use a private bathroom. Household contacts who cannot separate from the case will need to quarantine for 14 days **after** the case's infectious period ends, which may be a minimum of 24 days after the case is identified. This timeframe is because the person with COVID-19 is infectious for 10 days after symptom onset (or test date if asymptomatic), and household contacts must quarantine for 14 days after the last known exposure to the infectious case. When the case cannot fully separate from their household contacts, the household contacts' 14-day quarantine period begins when the case's 10-day infectious period ends.

If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

Individuals interested in receiving further PA-HANs are encouraged to register at <https://han.pa.gov/>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

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This information is current as of November 17, 2020 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.
