



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Revised Isolation Guidance

NORTH IDAHO – Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) have provided options to reduce the isolation period for asymptomatic close contacts of those who have tested positive for COVID-19. The 14 days of isolation is still best practice and is the safest way to avoid spreading this virus. The following are options for asymptomatic close contacts of a positive case to shorten isolation and are acceptable alternatives to reduce the burden of isolation on individuals, families, and businesses:

- Isolation can end after Day 10 from last close contact with the positive case without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
 - *With this strategy, residual post-isolation transmission risk is estimated to be about 1% with an upper limit of about 10%.*
- When diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available (see bullet 3, below), then isolation can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic PCR specimen tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. The specimen may be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned isolation discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but isolation cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.
 - *With this strategy, the residual post-isolation transmission risk is estimated to be about 5% with an upper limit of about 12%.*

In both cases, additional criteria (e.g., continued symptom monitoring and masking through Day 14) must be met and are outlined in the full text found on the CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

Regardless of what option you choose to follow, symptom monitoring, masking, hand hygiene, and physical distancing must continue through Day 14

For those following the testing strategy for isolation to end after day 7, the following criteria must be met:

- Testing must be a molecular amplification method (e.g. RT-PCR)
- The specimen can be collected no sooner than Day 5 of isolation
- Isolation can end only after the negative test result is available, but no earlier than Day 7.

If at any time an individual develops symptoms during their 14 days after their exposure to an individual who tested positive, they should isolate and seek testing.

The new isolation options do not apply to those living in congregate living settings, such as, long-term care facilities, correctional institutions, group homes, or rehabilitation facilities. Healthcare workers should continue following CDC Interim Guidance.

If you have questions about COVID-19 in our area, call PHD's COVID-19 hotline Monday – Friday, 8am-5pm, 877-415-5225.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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