

Sangamon County Department of Public Health

Recommendations for Isolation and Quarantine

Recommendations for the use of isolation and quarantine are an important component of a multi-layered strategy to prevent sustained spread of COVID-19. Persons who are isolated or quarantined must be treated with compassion and respect. In past situations where voluntary isolation and/or quarantine has been recommended, having a written agreement with the contact to adhere to SCDPH's recommendations for isolation and/or quarantine emphasizes the seriousness of the situation and helps to increase compliance. Isolation and quarantine are used to protect the public by preventing exposure to infected persons or to persons who may be infected.

Critically important, please don't go into the doctor's office or the emergency room because of symptoms that are not severe. If there is a true emergency (life-threatening) then call 911. Because of the seriousness and transmissibility of COVID19, medical providers must prepare and take steps to keep others from getting infected.

Definitions:

Separation (self-restriction/self-quarantine) means staying home as much as possible, confining activities and carefully practicing social distancing at every moment, limiting outside activities to essential needs.

Quarantine means restricting the movement of well persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may be known to have had exposure to a disease or a designated high-risk area for COVID-19 but do not show symptoms. Quarantine can also help limit the spread of communicable disease.

Isolation means separating ill persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases. For example, hospitals use isolation for patients with infectious tuberculosis.

Those people who have had limited contact with people under quarantine; limited contact means being around someone who is under quarantine (not known to be ill) for 10 mins to up to two hours while remaining six feet apart. Quarantine have had more contact with someone known to be infected (a person under isolation – known to be infected.)

When an entire household is isolated, SCDPH staff will work to put in place a mechanism to ensure that the families have an adequate supply of food and medicine. When a household has a mix of isolated individuals and quarantine individuals, one quarantined individual may leave the household for an hour to secure food, medicine and other essential supplies. This protocol applies to the household even if an isolated individual is no longer in the home (i.e. hospitalized.)

Shelter Requirements for Isolation:

1. The setting should be safe to allow persons to remain and avoid transmission from the exposed persons(s) to others in the household should the exposed person become symptomatic.

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2. Separate quarters with separate bathroom facilities for each individual or family group are preferred.
3. Access to a sink with soap and water, and disposable towels is needed.
4. The contact should have a way to self-isolate from household members and pets as soon as fever or other symptoms develop, as pets can carry viral droplets on their hair.
5. There should be a door that separates the isolation room from the rest of the living area and has its own bathroom.
6. Given that an exposed person might become ill while sleeping, the contact should sleep in a separate bedroom from household members and pets during the entire monitoring period.
7. Cleaning supplies, e.g. household cleaning wipes, must be provided in any shared bathroom. If an individual sharing a bathroom becomes symptomatic, all others sharing the bathroom should be considered contacts until the symptomatic person is appropriately evaluated and cleared.
8. Avoid close congregation for social or dining activities. Food should be delivered to the individual quarters.
9. Quarters should have a supply of face masks for individuals to wear if they become symptomatic.
10. Garbage should be bagged and left outside by the door of each of the quarters for routine pick up.
11. A system for temperature and symptom monitoring should provide assessment in-place for the individuals/family groups in their separate quarters.
12. The location should be secure against unauthorized access (e.g. appropriate for enforcing quarantine, if enacted).

Getting early and good clinical care improves health outcomes, immediate isolation of infected individuals can be and immediate evacuation from the home and isolation reduces the risk of infecting other household members. Isolation can be done at the residential setting; not all patients require hospitalization. Plan for how the individual would get to an appropriate healthcare provider or facility for medical evaluation. In an emergency, call 911. For a non-emergency, the SCDPH should be called first. Therefore, unless a medical emergency exists (in which case 911 should be called), the individual should contact the SCDPH, who would then facilitate follow-up (217-321-2606, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. M-F.)

Individuals under self-restriction or quarantine can walk outside their house on their own property, but they should not come within six feet of neighbors or other members of the public. This would not apply to persons living in a rental unit unless it is a single-family unit. Likewise, these individuals should refrain from walking in their neighborhood. There is no medical or public health reason why household members (including children) of asymptomatic persons under isolation or quarantine cannot continue to attend school or work unless under self-restriction. State and federal guidelines regarding school and work attendance should be followed. These persons have not been exposed to COVID-19 and are not at risk of developing COVID-19 as long as they remain unexposed.

Please follow the steps below until public health staff say you can return to your normal activities:

1. Stay home.
2. You should limit all activities outside your home, except to get medical care.
3. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transportation, taxis or ride shares.
4. Separate yourself from other people in your home. You should stay in a different room from other people in your home, as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
5. Call your doctor's office before you go in for your appointment. Tell them that you have or are being evaluated for COVID-19 infection. This will help the medical provider take steps to keep others from getting infected.
6. Wear a facemask. Wear a facemask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a medical provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the room with you.
7. Wash your hands. Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
8. Cover your coughs and sneezes. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
9. Avoid sharing household items. Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water.
10. Monitor your symptoms. Get medical attention right away if your symptoms get worse. Call your medical provider before going to your appointment and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID19 infection. This will help the medical provider take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your medical provider to call the local or state health department.

Additional information from SCDPH

Testing

Currently testing is done through the Illinois Department of Public Health/Sangamon County Department of Public Health. The Sangamon County Department of Public Health has to follow a protocol to authorize testing. Testing is also becoming available through private labs with a doctor's order, but this is rolling out slowly.

It is important that responsible citizens do not overwhelm our medical providers with requests for tests. The best policy is to stay home if you feel unwell. To best help yourself and the whole community please consult your provider's office via telephone. A telephone consultation is the most efficient way to determine if further testing is advisable.

In the near future

In a short period of time, additional testing will be available and more easily accessible. The Sangamon County Department of Health and its advisory team have developed a plan for large scale testing. Information will be published in the near future.

Advice about testing

More testing will be helpful in combatting the disease at some point. But it is important to realize that we follow the guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and the Illinois Department of Public Health as to if and when to implement a more comprehensive testing plan.

Restrictions on Gathering Size

Currently the maximum size of any event in a single room is 250 people. Please note, this restriction is by room not building. This restriction is mandatory. This requirement applies to businesses that accommodate large numbers of attendees like restaurants. Such businesses should impose procedures to limit the number of people (customers and employees, combined) to 250 people in the same four walls.

For the out-of-doors the restricted size is 500, unless and until there is a positive case of the virus in the community. Employers may, of course, impose their own additional regulations at their discretion.

Please note: Shopping does not constitute an event so shopping does not fall under the 250 person restriction. People are not in close proximity for significant periods of time while shopping, however we do suggest social distancing and handwashing to decrease risk even further. People should try to maintain as much normalcy as possible while shopping for groceries and essentials with above stated precautions.

Current Information on Transmission (please note that this statistics are the best currently available)

The best issue we have on the path of transmission of the virus can be found here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6909e1.htm>

Activities During School Closure

Our best defense against the spread of this disease is to limit contact as much as possible. In practical terms this means that birthday parties, play dates, gatherings with friends are best avoided.

Work Restrictions

At the current time, we do not recommend any work restrictions for otherwise healthy adults. Employers should feel free to adopt their own restrictions as they feel necessary for their work force. Anyone who feels ill is advised to stay home to avoid transmitting COVID-19 or any communicable disease. Persons with compromised immune systems should consult with their employer about an appropriate leave or working from home.

Last review 3/14/20