Exclusion clarification

If someone is being tested for COVID-19, do children in the same household have to stay home until the test results come back?

If someone in a household is asymptomatic (does not have symptoms of COVID-19) and is being tested for COVID-19, the other children not being tested do not need to be excluded (stay home) from school or child care.

If someone in a household is symptomatic (has symptoms of COVID-19) and is being tested, all children should be excluded (stay home) from school or child care until test results are known.

- If the test result is negative, children can return to school or child care.
- If the test result is positive, children should remain at home and begin a 14-day quarantine period starting on the last day they were in close contact with the person who has COVID-19. If the child cannot be separated from the household member with COVID-19, their 14-day quarantine period starts after their household member is no longer in isolation. A person with COVID-19 can be released from isolation when all three of these things are true:
  - They feel better (symptoms have improved).
  - It has been 10 days since they first felt sick (or since they were tested if no symptoms).
  - They have had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fevers.
Testing

If a person is a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 and tests negative any time during their 14-day quarantine period, do they still need to complete the 14-day quarantine period?

Yes, they need to complete the 14-day quarantine period. Even if a person who was a close contact tests negative during the 14-day quarantine period, they must finish out the quarantine period because it is possible that symptoms develop later or that the test result was a false negative. You cannot “test out” of the 14-day quarantine period.

How do we verify if a child has tested negative? Should we take parents at their word that a child has tested negative for COVID-19? Do we need a copy of the test result?

It is up to your school or program to determine whether and how to verify a COVID-19 test result.

Testing locations

Does MDH have a list of places that do COVID testing? Is there a way to know how long it will take to get test results?

Here are websites to help find testing locations:

- Find Testing Locations (mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/testing-locations/index.jsp)

MDH does not track how long it takes a testing site to provide results. We recommend that you ask each provider or testing site for an expected timeline.

Symptom screening

How should staff evaluate whether they are well enough to stay at school or their program for one “less common” symptom on the decision tree?

If a staff member has one “less common” symptom, they should self-evaluate whether they are well enough to be at work that day. It is recommended that the staff member stay home for 24 hours to see if the symptom persists, worsens, or another symptom develops. For a list of “less common” and “more common” symptoms, see COVID-19 Decision Tree for People in Schools, Youth, and Child Care Programs (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/exguide.pdf).
Health care provider evaluation and alternate diagnosis

Does a child, student, or staff member need to stay home if a health care provider has told them their symptoms are being caused by a non-COVID-19 diagnosis, like a viral upper respiratory infection?

A child, student, or staff member can return to school or work if they have received an alternate diagnosis (such as a viral upper respiratory infection) from a health care provider when symptoms have improved and the person is fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

What health care professionals are qualified to make a medical diagnosis?

Licensed physicians, physician assistants, and nurse practitioners are qualified to make a medical diagnosis. It is up to each school or program to determine whether or how to verify any medical diagnosis, including COVID-19 test results.

Close contacts and contact tracing

The decision tree states, “A close contact is a person who was within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes of someone who is infected.” Does the 15 minutes need to be consecutive (without breaks) or cumulative (spread out throughout the day)?

Generally speaking, a close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of a person diagnosed with COVID-19 for 15 or more continuous minutes. But depending on the circumstances, case investigators may consider the cumulative length of contacts that are less than 15 minutes. The staff doing the case investigation will consider all relevant circumstances in determining who was a close contact, including the presence of symptoms (e.g., active coughing or sneezing) and the length of each contact.

I was within 6 feet of a positive case for more than 15 minutes. Is it still considered close contact if the person who tested positive was wearing a mask and I was wearing a mask? What if the 15 minutes was outdoors?

MDH will consider all people “close contacts” if they were less than 6 feet from a positive case for more than 15 minutes, regardless of the presence of face coverings or plexiglass barriers, or whether the contact occurred inside or outside.

If I was within 6 feet of someone for 15 minutes before they developed symptoms (if symptomatic) or tested positive for COVID-19 (if asymptomatic), would I still be considered a close contact?

Maybe, depending on when the contact occurred. In general, close contacts are identified as those who were exposed to the person 48 hours prior to the date of symptom onset or 48 hours prior to the date of a positive COVID-19 test result if they are asymptomatic.

When does MDH, local public health, or a Tribal health authority begin case investigation?

Case investigation begins with a lab-confirmed positive COVID-19 test result. A suspected case of COVID will not result in a case investigation without a positive test result.
How long should school staff keep their classroom records such as seating charts, attendance, and lesson plans?

School staff should consider keeping records for a minimum of two weeks to help with the identification of close contacts and could dispose records on a rolling basis.

Who is considered a “household member”? Does the term include roommates?

A household member includes anyone living under the same roof and sharing common spaces, regardless of relationship.

Should we use contact tracing for students who are currently in distance learning?

Schools and child care only need to help identify the close contacts of positive cases who were physically present on school or facility property at the time of the contact.

### Quarantine and isolation

**If a household member of a staff, student, or child is positive for COVID-19 and cannot isolate themselves from others in the home, when does the staff, student, or child’s quarantine period begin?**

If the person who has COVID-19 cannot isolate from other household members, those household members should start their quarantine period when person’s symptoms have improved and it has been at least 10 days since the person first developed their symptoms.

Others in the home must then stay home for another 14 days (quarantine), in case they get symptoms of COVID-19. This means people are out of school or work for 24 days, unless they get sick or test positive for COVID-19.

**The decision tree states that a person may return when their symptoms have “improved.” What does that mean?**

In general, “improved symptoms” means that a person no longer feels ill, they have not had a fever for at least 24 hours, they are able to keep up with their daily routine as normal, and any remaining symptoms (such as a cough or runny nose) are mild and infrequent and do not interfere with daily living.

**How long should a positive lab-confirmed person who is asymptomatic stay home if they were NOT a close contact?**

People who test positive for COVID-19 without symptoms must isolate for 10 days starting with the date they were tested.

### Decision tree considerations

**Should siblings of a symptomatic child also be sent home?**

If the siblings live in the same home or otherwise have frequent contact, the best practice is to send the siblings of a symptomatic child or student home at the same time.
If a student has symptoms of COVID-19 (even if it is just one “less common” symptom) and parents bring them in for testing, do siblings living in the home need to stay home until test results are known?

Yes, the siblings living in the home need to remain at home until test results have been received because the student is symptomatic and getting tested for COVID-19.

Does the decision tree apply to parents who are not employees of the school or the child care program?

The decision tree applies to parents only if they are staff members in your school or program.

Resources for families

Are there resources available for families and staff that may be struggling financially due to the need for isolation and quarantine?

Yes, please see For Minnesotans: Get Help (mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/get-help/index.jsp).