

PRESS RELEASE

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COVID-19 "Exposure" Explained *Brought to you by Delaware County Public Health*

You attended a recent gathering or event and now learned that someone present had COVID-19. What's next? Are you exposed? Do you need to be tested?

"We understand the concern and alarm that some individuals may feel after learning that someone with confirmed COVID-19 attended an event or gathering you were also at. This is natural to be alarmed," shared Charity Loecke, Delaware County Public Health Coordinator. "But, we want to reassure our community that when things like this take place, as our communities continue to open back up, Public Health does have processes in place to conduct contact tracing. Through our contact tracing, if you are identified as close contact to the positive case, you will be contacted by Public Health."

QUESTION: What is considered being "EXPOSED" to COVID-19?

An individual is considered exposed if they have had close contact with a laboratory-confirmed positive case. Close contact is further defined as being within 6 feet of the person with COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes. So, if you were present at the same gathering but were not within 6 feet of the individual for more than 15 minutes, you would not be considered exposed.

QUESTION: If I was "EXPOSED" to COVID-19 (as defined above), what do I do?

If you meet the "exposure" criteria to a confirmed positive case, you will be identified through Public Health's contact tracing process and someone with Public Health will contact you. Those who are exposed need to follow the Isolation Guidance.

QUESTION: What is the Isolation Guidance for those "EXPOSED" to COVID-19?

Self-isolate for 14 days following your last exposure. This means you do not leave your home except for emergencies. You do not allow visitors in your home. You isolate yourself from others in your home if possible. This includes using a separate bathroom and bedroom, if able.

Following your full 14 day isolation period, if no COVID-19 symptoms appear (cough, fever, sore throat), you may return to work and leisure activities.

If symptoms of COVID-19 appear, you must notify your healthcare provider for additional guidance. You may not be able to return to work or leisure activities right away.

QUESTION: Should I be tested for COVID-19 if I was EXPOSED?

Individuals who have had close contact, defined as being within 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes, with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 may be tested through Iowa's State Hygienic Laboratory.

If you do get tested, testing must occur a minimum of 48 hours **after** the first exposure to the positive case.

It is important to note that by being tested, it does not change the guidance for you to isolate for 14 days. If a COVID-19 test comes back negative, you will not be released back to work or leisure activities until you have been isolated for the full 14 days since you were last exposed. Self-isolation is the most important step you can take to keep your family, friends, neighbors, and community safe and healthy.

If you have questions, please contact Delaware County Public Health at 563-927-7551 or your healthcare provider.