

Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCPHS): Protocol to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with COVID-19 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing

Quarantine is intended to reduce the risk that persons infected with COVID-19 might unknowingly transmit infection to others. It also ensures that persons who become symptomatic or are otherwise diagnosed during quarantine can be rapidly brought to care and evaluated. Quarantine can impose personal burdens that may affect physical and mental health as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance; discourage recently diagnosed persons from naming contacts; and deter contacts from responding to contact tracer outreach if they perceive the length of quarantine as burdensome.

When local circumstances and resources permit and when diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, CDC has indicated that a reduced quarantine period of 7 full days is an acceptable alternative if certain criteria are met. Testing for the purpose of earlier discontinuation of quarantine will be considered only when it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of persons seeking evaluation for infection will be prioritized.

A list of testing sites is available at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you> or by calling 888-364-3065.

Early Release Criteria

1. Appropriately Timed Negative Viral Test

Appropriately Timed Negative Viral Test: A negative COVID-19 viral test result from a diagnostic specimen. [Viral tests](#) include antigen tests and PCR tests.

- The test must be performed by a [laboratory permitted by the New York State Department of Health](#).
- The specimen must be collected no sooner than Day 5 of quarantine and within 48 hours of the time of planned quarantine discontinuation. Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. Day 5 of quarantine is defined as the fifth day after an individual’s last documented close contact exposure to an individual infectious with COVID-19 (“last exposure”). For example, if an individual’s last exposure took place sometime on September 1, the fifth day of quarantine would be on September 6. If a specimen collected on September 6 tested negative for COVID-19, the individual could potentially be released from quarantine after 11:59 PM on September 8.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
		Quarantine Day 1	Quarantine Day 2	Quarantine Day 3	Quarantine Day 4	Quarantine Day 5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Quarantine Day 5	Quarantine Day 6	Quarantine Day 7				
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		Potential release after 11:59pm on Quarantine Day 7				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- The laboratory report must include the name of the laboratory, name of the individual tested and their date of birth, the date the specimen was collected, and the result of the viral test.
 - **Self-administered, at-home tests are not eligible for this protocol.**
2. The individual under quarantine has not developed any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 since their last exposure, including the entirety of quarantine up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued.

People with COVID-19 have had a [wide range of symptoms reported](#) ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
3. The individual agrees to maintain continued vigilance against COVID-19 by adhering to the following conditions upon early release from quarantine and through Day 14 following their last exposure.
- **Masking:** The individual must wear a mask over the nose and mouth in the presence of other people, whether indoors or outdoors, except when eating or if the individual is <2 years old or has a condition for which a mask is not recommended (e.g., compromised breathing, inability to remove the mask).
 - **Symptom Monitoring:** The individual must remain alert for COVID-19 symptoms described above. If any develop, the individual must immediately self-isolate, contact their healthcare provider and the Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCHPS) at (518) 885-2276. However, in a true medical emergency, the individual should first call 911.
 - **Social Distancing:** The individual should stay at least 6 feet from other people; avoid crowds, poorly ventilated spaces, and public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis. When indoors, the individual should ensure adequate indoor ventilation whenever possible by opening windows and doors.
 - **Personal hygiene and environmental cleaning:** The individual should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol), especially after using the restroom, before preparing food, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. The individual should also clean and disinfect high touch surfaces frequently.