

COVID-19 Planning, Response, and Guidelines

Essential Services: Minnesota's isolation and quarantine law, enacted in 2002 as part of the Minnesota Emergency Health Powers Act, contains a provision that serves as the legal basis for the Commissioner of Health to isolate and quarantine certain individuals. Minnesota Statutes section 144.419, subdivision 2(g), states:

The needs of persons isolated and quarantined shall be addressed in a systematic and competent fashion, including, but not limited to, providing adequate food, clothing, shelter, means of communication between those in isolation or quarantine and those outside these settings, medication, and competent medical care.

MN Department of Health (MDH) Role: Responsible for following up with Isolated and Quarantined individuals to monitor their status and needs. If the Isolated or Quarantined individual has an essential need they are unable to meet within their circle of support, MDH will inform Public Health of that need. Also, MDH is responsible to contact the close contacts of Isolated or Quarantined individuals and may order Quarantine of those contacts for 14 days following the last exposure for each of those individuals.

St. Louis County Public Health Essential Services Duty: Public health has a legal and ethical duty to assure that essential needs are addressed for individuals who are in isolation and quarantine (I/Q). This includes individuals who are in I/Q pursuant to a court order obtained by MDH, as well individuals who are cooperating voluntarily with I/Q pursuant to MDH recommendation. Public Health awaits reports of individuals in Isolation or Quarantine from MDH regarding Essential Service needs.

COVID-19 Symptoms Testing Threshold (*as of March 23rd, 2020 – may change as more or less tests become available*): Per CDC: Persons with confirmed COVID-19 have mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of (1) a fever of over 100 degrees (2) cough, (3) shortness of breath and feeling fatigue. In order to be tested, you must have all of these symptoms. Congregate care settings are a testing priority, along with health care workers and hospitalized individuals. Otherwise, tests are very limited and unless symptoms are severe and need medical intervention people are advised to assume they have COVID-19 and self-quarantine for 14 days to reduce the spread.

CURRENT COVID-19 REALITY: We need to assume that many people have COVID-19 and are either asymptomatic (do not have any symptoms) or have minor and very manageable symptoms that do not meet testing threshold but could infect others. It is recommended that anyone with signs of respiratory illness: fever, cough, shortness of breath self-quarantine for 7 days after symptom onset or 72 hours after fever resolves, whichever is longer. We must prioritize protecting individuals who are high risk for acute medical intervention should they become Isolated and Quarantined. At all costs do not expose high-risk individuals!

Based upon available information to date, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include:

- People aged 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Other high-risk conditions could include:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have heart disease with complications
 - People who are immunocompromised including cancer treatment



St. Louis County Public Health & Human Services Department

- People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [(BMI)] ≥ 40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease might also be at risk
- People who are pregnant should be monitored since they are known to be at risk with severe viral illness, however, to date data on COVID-19 has not shown increased risk

Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications

EVERYONE SHOULD DO THE FIVE – Help stop coronavirus

- **HANDS** Wash them often
- **ELBOW** Cough into it
- **FACE** Don't touch it
- **SPACE** Keep safe distance (at least 6 feet)
- **HOME** Stay if you can

National Prevention Recommendations & Mandates Social Distancing and Shelter in Place

Social Distancing: Recommendations to stop or slow down the spread of disease allowing the health care system to more readily care for patients over time.

Cancelling events that are likely to draw crowds is an example of social distancing. Social distancing is deliberately increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness. Staying at least six feet away from other people lessens your chances of catching COVID-19.

Other examples of social distancing that allow you to avoid larger crowds or crowded spaces are:

- Working from home instead of at the office
- Closing schools or switching to online classes
- Visiting loved ones by electronic devices instead of in person
- Cancelling or postponing conferences and large meetings

Shelter in Place: Recommends residents stay in their homes and limit travel to essential trips, like picking up groceries, going to the bank, or receiving medical care.

ST. LOUIS COUNTY COMMUNITY COVID-19 PANDEMIC GOAL & PRIORITY: As much as possible we aim to keep everyone in place (shelter in place in their current setting) and Isolate and Quarantine where they are residing.

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease and prevents the spread.

Isolation separates those who have been tested and are awaiting results (4-5 day wait), or has tested positive for COVID-19 from people who have not. Isolation is for 7 days after symptom onset or 72 hours after fever, whichever is longer.

Group Isolation separates groups of Isolated individuals (those who have tested positive for COVID-19) to congregate together for 7 days after symptom onset or 72 hours after fever, whichever is longer.

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a person who has been tested and are awaiting results (4-5 day wait), or has tested positive for COVID-19 to see if they



St. Louis County Public Health & Human Services Department

become symptomatic. Health experts recommend that self-quarantine lasts 14 days. Two weeks provides enough time for them to know whether or not they will become ill and be contagious to other people. Someone who is released for COVID-19 quarantine is not considered at risk for spreading the virus to others (because they did not become ill during the incubation period).

Group Quarantine is the same as quarantine except that people quarantine in groups/congregate settings.

Self-quarantine involves:

- Using standard hygiene and washing hands frequently
- Not sharing things like towels and utensils
- Staying at home
- Not having visitors
- Staying at least 6 feet away from other people in your household
- Once your quarantine period has ended, if you do not have symptoms, follow your doctor's instructions on how to return to your normal routine.

If you have had close contact with a person that is symptomatic or had a lab-confirmed COVID-19 person should:

- monitor their health
- Call your local healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient (utensils, towels, bedding). If patient has used these items- you should wash them all thoroughly-immediately.
- Clean all "high touch surfaces with cleaning spray and/or wipes.
- Prohibit visitors that do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Household members should handle pets. Anyone with symptoms should not handle pets or their care.
- Practice good hygiene frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth. If you do, wash your hands.
- If a household member, partner or caregiver has to be in the same room as a patient who has symptoms or has been lab tested, always wear a mask and gloves if you need to perform caregiving needs. Throw the mask away and gloves and do not reuse.
- Discuss any additional questions with your state or local health department or healthcare provider. Check available hours when contacting your local health department.

[SPECIFIC GUIDANCE FOR HOMELESS SHELTERS](#)

WHAT TO DO

- If someone has all 3 symptoms and may need to be tested call your health care provider:
 - St. Luke's' Hotline: 218-249-4200
 - Essentia's Hotline : 1-833-494-0836
 - Essentia Health E-Visit – Free COVID-19 Screening
https://essentia.zipnosis.com/?_ga=2.116503045.2073315437.1584991490-1958451260.1584991490
 - St. Louis County: 218-625-3600
 - CDC Information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



St. Louis County Public Health & Human Services Department

- MDH: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html> Hotlines are listed.
- Fairview Range Medical Center (Hibbing): 218-262-4881
<https://www.mhealth.org/Care/Conditions/COVID-19>
- If medical professionals recommend the symptomatic individual comes in for testing follow their recommendations for safe transport. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting Isolated and Quarantined.
- If someone is tested and needs to be in isolation for 4-5 day waiting period. It is ideal that an individual remain in their current setting in isolation if at all possible.
 - If that is not possible contact your assigned Public Health Liaison or Social Services contact.
- If someone has acute medical needs they will be admitted to the hospital

Each facility, foster home, shelter, or home will be assigned a Public Health Liaison or Social Services point person. You will have the name, phone number, and email of that individual as well as other back-up contacts in case your licenser is unavailable in the case of an emergency and they are unable to be reached. If this is a medical emergency or need please contact your health care provider.

St. Louis County Public Health and Human Services is working diligently to develop appropriate resources for Isolation & Quarantine needs that cannot be met in the current setting.

Sources for the most up-to-date information: [Center for Disease Control and Prevention, MN Department of Health](#), [World Health Organization](#), [St. Louis County, MN](#)

