

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Dr. Sam Artzis, Health Officer
DATE: December 7, 2020

RE: Updates to 14-Day Quarantine

Northeast Tri County Health District (NETCHD) is now following the [new CDC quarantine guidance](#) for contacts of COVID-19 cases. A 14-day quarantine remains recommended as the safest option to prevent COVID-19 transmission for those who can do it. But now two other options will be available for people who do NOT develop symptoms.

If you've been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and you have no symptoms, NETCHD recommends the following:

1. Stay in quarantine for 14 days after your last contact with a COVID-19 positive person. **This is the safest option.**
2. If this is not possible, stay in quarantine for 10 days after your last contact with a COVID-19 positive person, without additional testing.
3. If the first two options are not possible, it may be possible to end quarantine after 7 full days beginning after your last contact *and* after receiving a negative result from a PCR test (get tested no sooner than day-5 after your last contact). *This will depend on availability of testing resources and may not be recommended in some settings.* If testing is done on a person without symptoms of COVID-19, our recommendation continues to be that a PCR test should be used. Currently, PCR results are being reported between one and four days but may be longer due to increased testing and lab capacity.

The new guidance attempts to balance the unintended economic hardship and other factors that may reduce compliance with a 14-day quarantine, and the risk of people developing COVID-19 after shortened quarantines, which potentially contributes to the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

When exposed to someone with COVID-19, there is risk of developing symptoms and illness through day 14. Even if people follow a "shortened" quarantine, it is critical to continue to monitor for symptoms through day 14, and if symptoms develop, to isolate and seek testing promptly.

Importantly, people should continue to take precautions to reduce the risk to others including distancing and mask-wearing through the full 14-day period.

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For healthcare, long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, correctional facilities and other congregate settings: When possible, a 14-day quarantine is preferred. The decision on quarantine duration in health care and other potentially high-risk transmission settings. If a 14-day quarantine period is not possible for essential workers, consideration should be based on staffing levels and details of the specific situation.

*Process adapted from Public Health Seattle King County