



COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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Kenosha County backs shorter quarantine for some COVID-19 close contacts

The Kenosha County Division of Health will support a new, shortened 10-day quarantine time for symptom-free individuals who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, Health Officer Dr. Jen Freiheit said today.

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidance that the 14-day quarantine length for close contacts can be condensed to seven days with a negative test result or 10 days without a test.

While noting that a reduced quarantine period may make it easier for people to quarantine by reducing economic hardship for people who cannot work during that time, the CDC continues to endorse the full, 14-day quarantine as the safest alternative, as the incubation period for the COVID-19 virus is two to 14 days.

The CDC is deferring to local public health authorities to make the final decisions about how long quarantines should last in their communities, based on local conditions and needs.

“Kenosha County supports the 10-day quarantine for close contacts, as long as they remain symptom-free,” Freiheit said. “Ideally, this earlier release from quarantine would come with a negative test result. Those who are not tested should continue to self-monitor for symptoms for an additional four days if they elect to come out of quarantine after Day 10.”

The new county protocols note that to ensure maximum accuracy, testing should not occur until six days after an individual’s last contact with a COVID-19-positive case.

Freiheit added that the Division of Health is not able to provide proof of negative test results to end quarantines. Test results may be obtained via email when tested at a Wisconsin National Guard testing site or should be requested from the medical facility that ordered testing.

Close contacts are identified as those who experienced at least one of the following connections with a COVID-19 case:

- You were within six feet of someone who has COVID-19 for 15 or minutes or more in a given day.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (handshake, hug, kiss, etc.).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

Household contacts of a COVID-19-positive individual who is not able to separate completely from others should continue their quarantine for at least 10 days after the positive case is released from his or her isolation. Complete separation means spending no time together in the same room and no sharing of any spaces, such as using the same bathroom.

These protocols do not apply to people who have had COVID-19 within the past 90 days, as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms within 90 days of their first bout of the virus may need to be tested if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms; they are advised to follow the recommendation of their physician.

The new Kenosha County guidelines take effect Tuesday, Dec. 8. People who have already been placed into isolation or quarantine prior to Dec. 8 will remain on their original schedules.

Freiheit said following the recommended protocols will help greatly to lessen the spread of COVID-19 in the community.

“I know that these guidelines can be confusing, and that they can cause great hardships for individuals and families,” Freiheit said. “But these are best practices that are rooted in science, and we’re asking the community to follow them — for their own health and safety, and so we can eradicate this virus as quickly as possible.”

For resources and guidance pertaining to quarantine and other COVID-19 information, visit the Kenosha County COVID-19 Response Hub at www.kenoshacounty.org/covid-19 or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For other questions, call the Kenosha County Health Department at 262-605-6700 or email COVID-19@kenoshacounty.org.

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