



COUNTY OF POLK
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New CDC Quarantine Options

On December 2, 2020, the CDC released two options to shorten the time that someone exposed to COVID-19 should stay home and separate from others during the 14-day quarantine period. The CDC has not shortened or altered the length of the incubation period for COVID-19. **The CDC continues to recommend staying home and away from others for the entirety of the 14-day quarantine as the best way to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.** The two alternative options to a full 14-day quarantine, as released by the CDC, lessen the self-separation and movement restrictions of quarantine only for exposed persons who do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and remain asymptomatic according to the following criteria:

Quarantine Alternative Option 1: Quarantine (staying home and away from others) can end after Day 10 (e.g., Day 11) without testing for COVID-19 if there are no symptoms or other clinical evidence of COVID-19 during the entire 10 days and up to the time at which separating from others is discontinued.

Quarantine Alternative Option 2: Quarantine (staying home and away from others) can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen tests negative for COVID-19 AND if there were no symptoms during the seven days. The specimen may be collected and tested on or after Day 5 of quarantine but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7 (e.g., Day 8). Quarantine must continue through Day 7 and/or until the negative test result is reported/received.

The following criteria must also be followed when an asymptomatic person discontinues staying home and separating from others according to Quarantine Alternative Options 1 and 2 as described above:

1. There are no symptoms of COVID-19 and/or any other clinical evidence of COVID-19 during the entirety of quarantine period up to and including the time that separation and movement restrictions are discontinued; and,
2. Daily and continual monitoring for symptoms continues through Day 14; and,
3. Strict adherence to non-pharmaceutical transmission prevention strategies occurs through Day 14 including but not limited to wearing a mask or face covering outside the home for the full 14-days, social distancing, frequent handwashing, and limiting activities/outings.
4. If symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and separate from others and contact a health care provider or the Polk County Health Department.

Please remember the following important points:

- **This new quarantine release guidance is only for persons who are asymptomatic.** These alternative options are not intended for any exposed person who has symptoms or experienced one or more symptoms at any time during the quarantine period or who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Not everyone experiences every symptom of COVID-19; and some may only have one or two very mild symptoms. COVID-19 can present like seasonal allergies or a mild cold.

- Be aware of and watch for symptoms of COVID-19 which include one or more of the following: fever or feeling feverish, 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, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Immediately isolate away from others and contact your health care provider and/or the Polk County Health Department if symptoms of COVID-19 develop.
- COVID-19 testing for Alternative Option 2 must be conducted on or after Day 5 of quarantine and no earlier than Day 5. A negative COVID-19 test conducted before Day 5 of quarantine cannot be used to release an exposed person from quarantine at any point during the quarantine period including on or after Day 7.
- For the full 14-days of quarantine, stay away from individuals who are at increased risk for severe illness or complications from COVID-19 (including but not limited to older adults, people with medical conditions, pregnant women and people who live in nursing homes, long-term care facilities or group homes).
- These alternative options may be utilized with asymptomatic individuals currently in quarantine as long as all applicable criteria are met.

Updated December 4, 2020