Why does Quarantine for COVID-19 last for 14 days?

What is quarantine?
Quarantine is used to keep someone exposed to COVID-19 away from others during the time when they could become sick or become infected with COVID-19 without feeling symptoms. Quarantine prevents further spread of COVID-19 to other people.

Why am I in quarantine?
You are in quarantine because you were exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Why am in quarantine for 14 days?
When you are exposed to a virus, you don't become sick immediately. It takes some time for the virus in your body to make you sick. Fourteen days is the time between when you were exposed to COVID-19 and when you may become sick or become infected without feeling symptoms. This is called the incubation period. The incubation period for COVID-19 is 14 days, so you should stay in quarantine for 14 days to prevent spreading COVID-19 to others if you become sick or infected without feeling symptoms.

What if I test negative during the 14 days? Can I get out of quarantine?
Even if you test negative during your 14-day quarantine, you still need to stay in quarantine for the full 14 days. A COVID-19 test measures one point in time during your quarantine period. If you test negative, you still may develop COVID-19 after the test. A negative test does not end your quarantine; it simply tells you that you were negative on the day you were tested. You can still develop COVID-19 through the 14th day of quarantine. People have developed symptoms of COVID-19 as late as Day 14 of their quarantine.

Can I go to school, work or play sports if I am in quarantine?
No, people in quarantine should stay home and separate themselves from other people.

- Do NOT go to school or work. Do NOT visit with family/friends, play sports, or participate in activities for the entire 14 days. Stay home and away from others for all 14 days.

- Stay away from people who are at higher-risk for becoming seriously ill from COVID-19 including older people (65 years and older) and people with other health conditions.

- Watch for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and take your temperature twice a day. COVID-19 symptoms can include 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 or diarrhea.

- If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your health care provider.

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