



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): COVID-19 Contact Tracing At Schools, Childcares, and Programs for Children and Youth

This FAQ was developed by the Modoc County Public Health Department for use by local facilities and will be posted at <http://modohealthservices.org/corona-virus>. Information may change.

AUDIENCE: Administrators and COVID-19 liaisons at schools, child care programs and other programs for children and youth.

BACKGROUND: When a case of COVID-19 occurs at a school, child care program, or another program for children and youth, MCPH works with the program to identify those people who may have been infected by the person with COVID-19. MCPH then helps those people get tested and quarantine at home so that they do not infect others. This process, called contact tracing, is crucial to prevent spread of COVID-19 infection.

Helpful Definitions	
Infectious	A person who is able to give the virus that causes COVID-19 to other people. People with COVID-19 are considered infectious from 2 days before their symptoms first start until 10 days after their symptoms started, assuming they are recovered after 10 days. If a person with COVID-19 has no symptoms, they are considered infectious from 2 days before their positive test was collected until 10 days after the positive test.
Exposed	A person who has been in close enough contact with someone who was infectious with COVID-19, that they could also get infected.
Close Contact	Someone who was within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes, during the time that the person with COVID-19 was infectious. For pods/cohorts of children under 12, MCPH considers all children and staff in a cohort to be close contacts.
Quarantine	Quarantine is used to keep people who have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others while they may be infected. After someone has been exposed to COVID-19, they must stay home and away from other people for a recommended period, usually 14 days after their last exposure, to see if they become sick or infectious.
Isolation	Isolation is used to keep people with COVID-19 away from others while they are infectious.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is contact tracing and why is it important?

- Contact tracing is a process of
 - Finding out everyone who was in close contact with someone with COVID-19,
 - Letting them know they *may* have been infected with COVID-19, and
 - Telling them to quarantine and helping provide them with resources, including how to get tested.
- Contact tracing is important because COVID-19 spreads easily between people. The spread can be slowed down or prevented by separating the people who may be infected from other people.
- Contact tracing usually starts by talking to the person with COVID-19 to find out everyone that they were in close contact with during the time that they were infectious.
- Sometimes it is helpful to talk to other people in addition to the infected person, in order to get information about who they were in close contact with.
- Modoc County Public Health (MCPH) has a Case Investigation and Contact Tracing team. When someone in Modoc County has a positive COVID-19 test, the team reaches out to that person, and others if needed, to find out who they were in contact with. Then the team reaches out to each close contact to make sure they are safely quarantining and can get tested.

What is the contact tracing process if there is a case of COVID-19 at school, childcare, camp or other program for children and youth?

- MCPH and site administrator or COVID-19 liaison at the program will discuss who may have been exposed.
- MCPH interviews the person with COVID-19, or their family in the case of a child, to find out who they might have exposed to COVID-19.
- Site administration at the program contacts people at the program who may have been exposed, as directed by MCPH, to tell them that a Contact Tracer from MCPH will be calling them soon. This way, nobody is surprised or suspicious when they get a call shortly thereafter.
- Site administration at the program gives the names, phones numbers and other contact information of people who may have been exposed to the MCPH Contact Tracing Team.
- The MCPH Contact Tracing Team calls the people who may have been exposed (i.e. staff, children, or their parents). The team helps people understand what to expect and what to do next. They refer people for testing for COVID-19 and to resources to help them quarantine.



How does Contact Tracing protect the identity of the person who tests positive for COVID-19?

- Contact Tracing must protect confidentiality of the person with COVID-19. This is required by Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).
- The site administration is required to know the identity of the person with COVID-19 in order to take action to protect everyone else.
- MCPH will not reveal the identity or personal details of the person with COVID-19 to any other staff or families who are contacted. The families will be told that their child was exposed to someone with COVID-19, but no name will be given.

As a site administrator, what is my responsibility?

- Refer to the California Department of Public Health guidance at <https://covid19.ca.gov/industry-guidance/#top>
- Work with MCPH to identify close contacts. MCPH will ask site administration to submit a list of names and contact information (including addresses) for all close contacts. For assistance, please contact MCPH at 530.233.6311 after hours call Tanya Schulz 530.708.2891 or Cheyenne O'Sullivan at 530.708.2924. A list of contacts can be faxed to 530.233.6332. A sample contact list is provided.
- Once close contacts are identified in partnership with MCPH, send all close contacts the *Quarantine Packet* at <http://modohealthservices.org/public-health-news/262-home-quarantine-guidance>

Who are typical close contacts in programs for children and youth?

- For pods or cohorts of children under 12 years all, all staff and children in the same pod or cohort (i.e. classroom) as the person with COVID-19 are considered close contacts.
- Close contact also includes people who live with, take care of, or are taken care of by the person with COVID 19. This includes siblings, other family members, and caregivers.
- Additional situations that involve close contact include carpooling, eating together, and socializing together outside of the program.

Who will need to quarantine in the event of a positive COVID-19 case?

- Everyone who has been in close contact with the person with COVID-19 must quarantine for 14 days after their last exposure.
- All close contacts will be requested to obtain a COVID-19 PCR test. The MCPH Contact Tracing Team will connect close contacts to testing. However, getting a COVID-19 test during the quarantine period does not shorten the 14-day quarantine. This is because a person can have a negative test in the early stages of their infection.
- MCPH will do a risk assessment, including interviews of the infected person and possibly others. Together with the site administration, MCPH will determine who is a close contact and who needs to quarantine.



- Note: the person with COVID-19 infection will also need to stay at home and away from others for at least 10 days after their symptoms started (or if they have no symptoms, at least 10 days from the date their positive test was collected).

What does it mean for a child (12 years old and younger) to quarantine?

- Children under quarantine should stay home. They are not allowed to leave the home except for medical care. They can be in private outdoor spaces in their home that are not shared with other households (i.e. private backyards). They cannot go to parks, playground, or other public spaces. They cannot attend schools, childcare, or other programs for children and youth. They cannot have playdates with other children at their home or interact with people outside their immediate household, such as babysitters.

Who is considered at general exposure risk?

- Being a person at general exposure risk is not the same as being a close contact of someone who is infected. People who are at general exposure risk were present at the site on the same day, but not identified by MCPH as close contacts. These people have a much lower risk of getting infected than the close contacts.
- These people should still be told that someone at the school, childcare or program had confirmed COVID-19, but that they were not identified as a close contact.
- They should monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, but do not need to quarantine or get tested if they do not have symptoms.



SAMPLE TEMPLATE: List of Close Contacts of Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Case

In order to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Modoc County, please help by collecting names of close contacts to confirmed positive cases. MCPH will contact them to offer support and provide information on limiting the spread of the virus and testing. This template can be a useful tool to help organize information.

Instructions: Complete the information below for every school- or office-related close contact. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive testing date or specimen collection), continuing until the time the patient is isolated. Parent/Guardian name is only needed if the close contact is a student. For pods/cohorts of children under 12, MCPH considers all children and staff in a cohort to be close contacts.

→ When completed within 24 hours and provide the names and contact information of identified close contacts. Submit this form via fax to (530) 233-6332.

Site Name (school or office):

Table with 6 columns: Close Contact's First Name, Last Name; Parent/Guardian First Name, Last Name; Phone Number; Date of Birth; City/County of Residence. Rows 1-18.

* Add more rows if necessary