PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testing and Management Guidance for Patients
After Exposure to SARS-CoV-2

DATE:	9/21/2020
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	**Testing and Management Guidance for Patients After Exposure to SARS-CoV-2**
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This transmission is a "Health Advisory", provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL**; EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS**: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

- Individuals who have been in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case should be tested for SARS-CoV-2, regardless of the presence of symptoms.
- SARS-CoV-2 testing may also be advised for individuals who were in a substantial transmission zone and attended a gathering of more than 10 people without universal mask wearing and physical distancing.
- Persons who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 do not need to repeat a test for at least 3 months.

This Health Advisory provides recommendations and considerations for use of SARS-CoV-2 testing for both people with symptoms of COVID-19 and for asymptomatic people who were exposed to SARS-CoV-2. This guidance is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released on September 18, 2020. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) provides this guidance based on available information about COVID-19 and is subject to change.

For Patients Who Are Asymptomatic Close Contacts of a COVID-19 Case:

Because of the potential for asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, it is important that contacts of individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection be quickly identified and tested. **It is recommended that, regardless of the presence of symptoms, close contacts should be tested for COVID-19.** Close contacts are people who have been within 6 feet of a person with documented SARS-CoV-2 infection for at least 15 minutes. Asymptomatic individuals with a known possible exposure to SARS-CoV-2, should wait **at least 2-3 days** before being tested to increase the likelihood that the test will detect virus if present.

For individuals who were in a substantial SARS-CoV-2 transmission zone and attended a gathering of more than 10 people without universal mask wearing and physical distancing, SARS-CoV-2 testing may be advised. Substantial activity is defined as any county experiencing a percent positivity of greater than or equal to 10% or incidence rate greater than or equal to 100 per 100,000. This information can be found on the PADOH COVID-19 Dashboard.

Pending test results, the patient should self-quarantine at home and stay separated from household members to the extent possible and use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.

If the test is positive, then the patient needs to isolate at home until they meet the criteria for discontinuation of non-healthcare isolation. If the patient's symptoms worsen or the patient begins to experience emergency warning signs (e.g. trouble breathing), the patient should seek medical care immediately.

A single negative test does not mean that the patient will remain negative at any time point after that test. As such, patients under quarantine after being exposed to SARS-CoV-2 must complete their full quarantine period. A negative test result does NOT allow the patient to end their quarantine period early.

Individuals who are quarantined should stay home for 14 days after their last known contact. They should watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19. If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19. Additional information about quarantine can be found at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html.

For Patients Who Have Symptoms of COVID-19:

If a close contact develops symptoms, even if the symptoms are mild, the contact should promptly seek testing. If a patient is being evaluated for COVID-19 and has symptoms compatible with the disease, healthcare providers (HCPs) may advise SARS-CoV-2 testing. While waiting for the test results, the patient must isolate. If the test results are positive, the patient must continue to self-isolate at home for at least 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications and with improvement of other symptoms. If the patient lives with someone who is at increased risk of severe illness, the patient should take special precautions in the home to protect that individual. If symptoms worsen, the patient should contact their HCP.

Individuals who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 do not need to repeat a test for at least 3 months after the first test unless new symptoms develop or they are advised to do so by a healthcare provider.

If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH** (**1-877-724-3258**).

This information is current as of September 21, 2020 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.