

BACKGROUND

Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and their contacts (people who may have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission. For COVID-19, this includes asking cases to [isolate](#) and contacts to [quarantine](#) at home voluntarily.

Contact tracing for COVID-19 typically involves:

- Interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone with whom they had close contact during the time they may have been infectious and ask for information about symptoms and exposure
- Notifying contacts of their potential exposure
- Referring contacts for testing
- Monitoring contacts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Connecting contacts with services they might need during the self-quarantine period

To prevent the further spread of disease, COVID-19 contacts are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Contacts should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice daily and watching for [symptoms](#) of COVID-19. Anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 should get [tested](#).

WHAT HAPPENS DURING CONTACT TRACING?

Generally, contact tracing includes the following steps:

- Case investigation: Public health staff work with a patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the time when they may have been infectious. Staff will also ask other questions about the patient's illness.
- Contact tracing: Public health staff begin contact tracing by notifying exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.
- Contact support: Contacts are provided with education, information, and support to help them understand their risk, what they should do to separate themselves from others who are not exposed, and how to monitor themselves for illness. In addition, they are informed of the possibility that they could spread the infection to others even if they do not feel ill.
- Self-quarantine: Contacts are encouraged to stay home, monitor their health and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to the infected patient in case they also become ill.

WHO IS CONSIDERED A CLOSE CONTACT TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19?

For COVID-19, a close contact is defined as anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least a total of 15 minutes over a 24-hour period starting from 48 hours before the person began feeling sick until the time the patient was isolated.

WHAT CAN A PERSON WITH COVID-19 EXPECT TO HAPPEN DURING CONTACT TRACING?

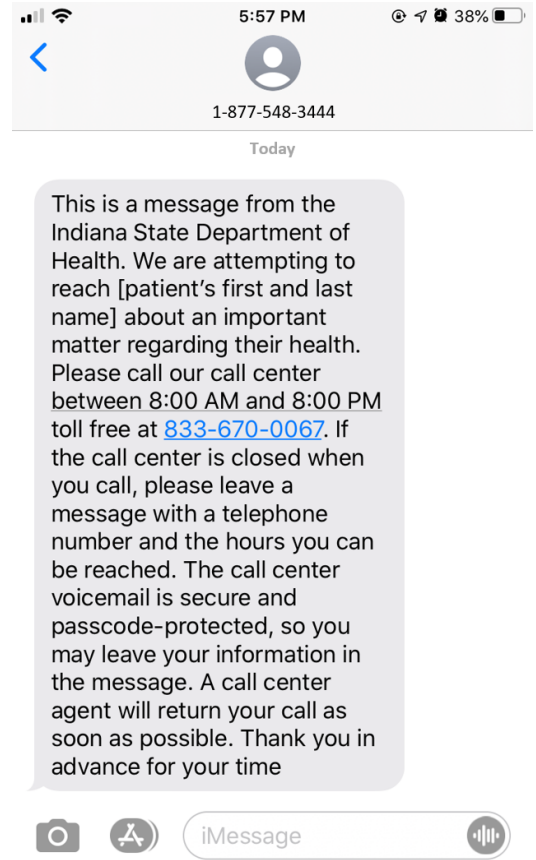
If you are diagnosed with COVID-19, a case investigator from the health department may call you to check in on your health, discuss who you've been in contact with, and ask where you spent time while you may have been infectious and able to spread COVID-19 to others.

You'll receive the text message shown on the right. The text will come from 877-548-3444. You'll then receive a call from a contact tracer. The number on the caller ID will show as 833-670-0067 or may display as "IN Health COVID" if your carrier allows it. When you are contacted, please answer the call so we can protect the health of others who may have been exposed.

You will also be asked to stay at home and self-isolate, if you are not doing so already.

- Your name **will not** be revealed to those you may have exposed, even if they ask.
- Self-isolation means staying at home in a specific room away from other people and [pets](#), and using a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Self-isolation helps slow the spread of COVID-19 and can help keep your family, friends, neighbors, and others you may come in contact with healthy.
- If you need support or assistance while self-isolating, your local health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

Symptoms of COVID-19 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, and diarrhea. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, you should seek medical care. Severe symptoms include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.

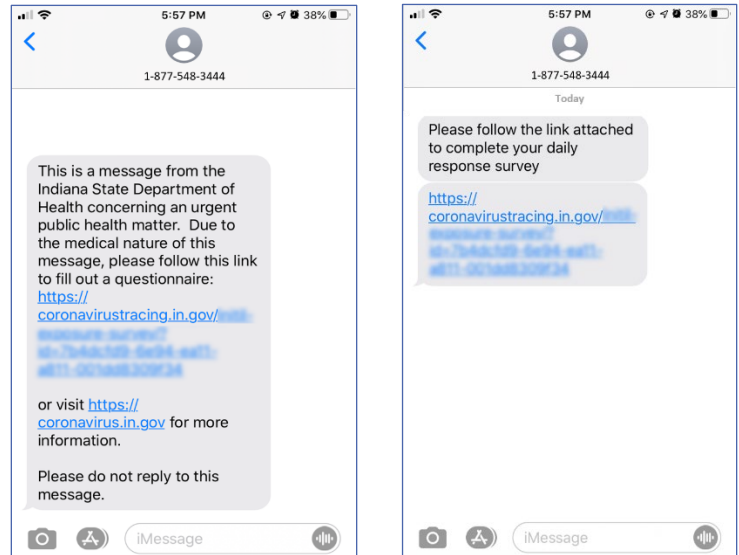


WHAT CAN CLOSE CONTACTS EXPECT DURING CONTACT TRACING?

If you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19, a contact tracer from the health department might contact you to inform you that you've been exposed to COVID-19.

You'll receive the text message shown on the right. The text will come from 877-548-3444. The text message has a link to a survey used to assess your risk of exposure. The ISDH call center will attempt to call close contacts who don't respond to the survey or connect via the text message up to three times from 833-670-0067.

You should stay at home and self-quarantine for 14 days, starting from the last day you were possibly exposed to COVID-19. The contact tracer will help identify the dates of your self-quarantine. The contact tracer can also provide resources about COVID-19 testing in your area.



- Self-quarantine means staying home, monitoring your health, and maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet) from others at all times. This also means you should not return to work or school. Contact tracers can provide a letter with the date of return.
- If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering. This will help protect the people around you.
- If you need support or assistance with self-quarantine, your local health department or community organizations may be able to provide assistance.

You should take your temperature twice a day, watch for symptoms of COVID-19, and notify your health department if you develop symptoms. You should also notify people you had close contact with recently if you become ill, so that they can monitor their health. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, you should seek medical care. Severe symptoms include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.

AM I CONSIDERED A CLOSE CONTACT IF I WAS WEARING A CLOTH FACE COVERING?

Yes, you are still considered a close contact even if you were wearing a cloth face covering while you were around someone with COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are meant to prevent someone from transmitting the disease to others, not to protect someone from becoming infected.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH MY PERSONAL INFORMATION DURING CONTACT TRACING?

Discussions with health department staff are confidential. This means that your personal and medical information will be kept private.

Your name will not be revealed to those you came in contact with. The health department will only notify your close contacts that they might have been exposed to COVID-19.

WHAT IF I HAVE BEEN AROUND SOMEONE WHO WAS IDENTIFIED AS A CLOSE CONTACT?

If you have been around someone who was identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19, you should closely monitor yourself for any symptoms of COVID-19. You do not need to self-quarantine.

WILL ISDH ISSUE LETTERS FOR SCHOOL OR WORK EXCUSAL FOR PATIENTS AND CONTACTS?

A work exclusion letter is mailed to all positive patients and close contacts that explains when they can end their isolation period and return to work. It can be emailed at the patient's request. Additional enhancements will enable ISDH to send a more specific letter to employers that includes the end of isolation date. This form will represent an official notice from the ISDH, so no physician note will be necessary from ISDH's perspective.

RESOURCES

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

ISDH Contact Tracing Hotline: 833-670-0067

CDC COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>

ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>

ISDH COVID-19 testing webpage: <https://www.coronavirus.in.gov/2524.htm>