

## What exactly does it mean to be exposed to the virus?

Exposure to the virus means coming into contact with a hard surface touched by someone known to have the virus or being within close contact of someone known to have the virus.

“Close contact is defined as—

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– or –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met”

See CDC’s updated [Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Persons Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus](#).

Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19 (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.”

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

## If an employee has been determined to have been exposed or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, who needs to be quarantined/isolated as of a result of that in their workplace?

“The virus that causes COVID-19 is [spreading from person-to-person](#). Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why CDC recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

How long someone is actively sick can vary so the decision on when to release someone from isolation is made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with doctors, infection prevention and control experts, and public health officials and involves considering specifics of each situation including disease severity, illness signs and symptoms, and results of laboratory testing for that patient.

Current [CDC guidance for when it is OK to release someone from isolation](#) is made on a case by case basis and includes meeting all of the following requirements:

- The patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The patient is no longer showing symptoms, including cough.
- The patient has tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart.

Someone who has been released from isolation is not considered to pose a risk of infection to others.”

Social distancing is very important as it limits personal direct exposure. Employees should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms of illness.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

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