

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

December 4, 2020

Health Department Updates Quarantine Period for Close Contacts

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department will adopt the latest CDC guidance that allows for a reduced quarantine period for persons who have been in contact with a COVID-19 infected person from 14 days to 10 or 7 days.

The CDC and the Hamilton County Health Department still recommend a 14-day quarantine period, which remains the safest approach to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The CDC now allows for:

- Quarantine to end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms occur during daily monitoring.
- Quarantine to end after Day 7 with a negative test taken on Day 5 or after, and if no symptoms occur during daily monitoring.

Quarantine may end at these time points only if the following criteria are also met:

- The person shows no symptoms of COVID-19 the entire duration of the quarantine period;
- The person continues to monitor for symptoms following their release through Day 14; and
- The person strictly adheres to these measures following their release through Day 14:
 - Correct and consistent mask use,
 - Social distancing,
 - Hand and cough hygiene,
 - Environmental cleaning and disinfection,
 - Avoiding crowds,
 - Ensuring adequate indoor ventilation, and
 - Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness.

The new CDC guidance can be read in full here: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>).

According to the CDC, close contacts are defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more.

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Updated Contact Tracing Process

Any person receiving a positive COVID-19 test result, regardless of where they were tested, should self-isolate immediately, start calling their close contacts to notify them of their exposure, and ask them to quarantine according to these new guidelines. This immediate notification will help reduce the spread of the virus.

The Health Department is not sending letters of quarantine as they have in the past. Therefore, employers should no longer expect this. Employees need to explain the situation to their employer and make a plan.

“These changes in mitigation strategy are due to an increased number of positive cases in Hamilton County, an increase in testing, test result delays, and a strain on computer reporting systems,” said Health Department Administrator Becky Barnes.

Close contacts may not receive a letter or phone call from the Health Department notifying them of their close contact status at this time. The public’s proactive adherence to these guidelines can reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

New COVID-19 Testing Hours at Alstom

- 10:00AM-2:30PM
- This change is to accommodate staff and patients during the colder temperatures.
- Everyone in the car should wear a mask.
- Free transportation to the testing site is available by calling (423) 209-8383.
- View the Health Department’s online calendar for more details [here](#).

Free Flu Vaccine

Two upcoming opportunities for free flu vaccine are as follows, thanks to a partnership with the Benwood and Maclellan Foundations:

- Saturday, December 5, 10:00AM-2:00PM, Westside Baptist, 4001 Hughes Ave, 37410.
- Monday, December 7, 3:00PM-5:30pm, Casa de Oracion Santa Cruz Catholic Church, 2311 E. 23rd Street, 37407.

Information Hotline

If you have questions about COVID-19 or the flu vaccine, call the Health Department’s informational hotline at (423) 209-8383.

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Additional information may be accessed through these Health Department resources:

- Subscribe to the Health Department's Mailing List and receive press releases and updates in your inbox: <https://landing.mailerlite.com/webforms/landing/j6u3e5>
- Website: <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>
- English Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTNHealthDept/>
- Spanish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN/>
- YouTube English: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkF8VUBQFLiJoxh8Sk10mA>
- YouTube Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHuLpBFuLOf6hDTCFbfyQ>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HamiltonHealth>

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