



Arkansas Department of Health

4815 West Markham Street • Little Rock, Arkansas 72205-3867 • Telephone (501) 661-2000
Governor Asa Hutchinson
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

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The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) wants to update healthcare providers on Arkansas's recent adoption of new guidelines concerning the length of quarantine period for people who have been **exposed** to a person known to have COVID-19, i.e. close contacts. These changes were adopted on December 3, 2020 after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced new recommendations on December 2, 2020 and are now in effect. Please note that this change in guidance **does not** apply to the length of isolation for those diagnosed with COVID-19, i.e. cases.

Options for length of quarantine follow:

- CDC currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days. This remains the safest quarantine option.
- Quarantine can end **after** Day 10 (i.e., on Day 11) without testing **and if** no symptoms have occurred during the quarantine period.
 - With this strategy, residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 1% with an upper limit of about 10%.
- Quarantine can end **after** Day 7 (i.e., on Day 8) if the close contact tests negative **and if** no symptoms have occurred during the quarantine period.

The specimen must be collected no sooner than Day 5 of quarantine. Even if the test is negative, quarantine cannot be discontinued until after Day 7.

 - With this strategy, residual post-quarantine transmission risk is estimated to be about 5% with an upper limit of about 12%
- If at any time during quarantine the close contact develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately isolate and be tested for COVID-19 (even if they previously had a negative test during this quarantine period).

ADH prefers the use of PCR for testing of close contacts during quarantine. However, antigen tests may be used with the understanding the risk of residual post-quarantine transmission is higher than with PCR.

We emphasize that the above options *only* apply to those who have no symptoms.

All individuals who meet the above criteria and come out of quarantine prior to day 14 need to adhere strictly to other measures to reduce spread (masking, social distancing, hand hygiene, monitoring symptoms, reduce social activities, etc.) through day 14.

These guidelines **do not** apply to long-term care or correctional facilities, which are subject to a separate guidance issued by ADH.

The CDC guidance on which this change was based can be found [here](#).

An updated ADH webpage for the public reflecting these changes can be found [here](#). A helpful, updated patient handout that describes quarantine more fully [can be found here](#).