

Arlington County: Steps for COVID-19 Contact Tracing

1) Labs & Health Care Providers Report COVID-19 Cases to the Health Department



Labs and healthcare providers report COVID-19 **cases** to the health department. After getting these reports, Arlington County starts a process called “Contact Tracing.” The health department does not test for COVID-19. For testing information visit: <https://health.arlingtonva.us/covid-19-coronavirus-updates/covid-19-testing>.

2) Interview Case



Arlington County contacts the **case** (person diagnosed with COVID-19) and asks about:

- Their symptoms and when they started
- Who they have been within 6 feet of for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (48 hours before symptoms started until they stopped having contact with others)—these people are the case’s **close contacts**
- Things that may make them more likely to get very sick (e.g., pre-existing health conditions)
- Things that make them more likely to expose others (e.g., having close contact, living with others, sharing food utensils, occupation)

3) Advise Case



Arlington County staff advise the case to:

- Not have physical contact with others (**isolation period**) until they are no longer likely to pass the illness on to others
- Follow guidelines for household cleaning and personal hygiene (e.g., hand washing)
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19
- Treat minor symptoms of COVID-19 with standard over the counter medications
- Safely seek care from a health care provider (by calling ahead) if symptoms worsen
- Wear a mask if it is necessary to be around others and maintain at least 6 feet of distance

4) Interview Close Contacts to Case



Next, Arlington County reaches out to the case’s close contacts. Staff let them know they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 and assess their risk of getting sick. Risk is based on:

- Time and closeness of the contact with the case (i.e., spending more time with the case in proximity increases risk)
- Type of contact with the case (i.e., a lot of physical touching or contact with the case’s bodily fluids increases risk)
- Any additional factors like the contact’s occupation

5) Advise Close Contacts to Case



After assessing risk, staff advise the close contact to:

- Stay at home for 14 days from the last date they were in close contact with the case (**quarantine period**)
- Follow guidelines for household cleaning and personal hygiene (e.g., hand washing)
- Monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- Treat minor symptoms of COVID-19 with standard over the counter medications
- Safely seek care from a health care provider (by calling ahead) if symptoms worsen
- Wear a mask if it is necessary to be around others and maintain at least 6 feet of distance

6) Monitor Cases and Close Contacts at Higher Risk



Staff regularly contact cases and close contacts at higher risk of getting sick. They:

- Ask if their symptoms have gotten better or worse, or stopped
- Identify problems they may have staying isolated from others
- Offer resources to support them
- Assess their readiness to be released from quarantine or isolation

7) Release from Restrictions



Staff assess when release from isolation or quarantine is appropriate. Release is based on length of time, when symptoms end, and other factors.

Please see our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information on Contact Tracing