



Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 Contact Tracing

Q. What happens if I test positive for COVID-19?

A. Someone from a public health agency will contact you. A trained health worker calls people who test positive for COVID-19 to ask about their symptoms, how they may have been infected, and who they may have infected. They will also provide information on how to keep you, your family and community safe and healthy.

Q. What is Contact Tracing?

A. Contact tracing helps to slow the spread of COVID-19. Tracing means finding and talking to people who are infected with COVID-19, and then finding and talking to all the people they may have infected. If all of these people then stay home and away from others, they cannot spread the disease. It is important for them all to stay home, because even though some people with COVID-19 never feel sick, they still can give the disease to others.

Q. Why is Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) notified if I test positive for COVID-19?

A. Doctors, nurses, hospitals, and labs report the names of people who test positive for COVID-19 to the health department, the same way they report other infectious diseases. They also give the test results to the person who tested positive, and tell them what to do next.

Q. Will public health staff ask me about my immigration status, or the immigration status of my family?

A. No. Public health staff will not ask for your immigration status. Public health staff is only concerned with preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Q. Can I refuse to answer questions?

A. Yes. You have the right to refuse to answer any or all of the questions. Answering questions helps public health staff to notify people who have been exposed so they can help prevent spreading the virus to others.



Q. I do not want to share information about my family and/or partner. Can I refuse to give that information?

A. Yes, you can refuse to provide information about your family and/or partner. Answering questions helps public health staff to notify people who have been exposed so they can help prevent spreading the virus to others.

Q. Why do public health staff ask who I have been in contact with if I test positive for COVID-19?

A. Public health staff want to identify those who you have been in contact with to prevent the spread of COVID.

Q. Will public health staff share my name or other information with anyone who I might have had contact with before I found out that I had COVID-19?

A. Your information will be kept strictly confidential unless you give permission for us to share your name. In very rare circumstances, MDH may need to share your name with your workplace, school, or childcare to protect the health and safety of others even if you didn't agree. MDH will attempt to reach you and explain why your name may need to be shared prior to doing so.

Q. Does the public have access to the information I provide to public health staff?

A. No. The answers you provide are stored on a secure database. The general public does not have access to the database.

Q. Does the police or other law enforcement have access to information I provide to public health staff?

A. The Department of Public Safety (which includes law enforcement) has access to your address if you are still in isolation due to a positive COVID-19 test, but does not have access to your name or any other information. **If you do not want your address shared with the Department of Public Safety, you can refuse to provide and/or verify your address.**



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Q. Does Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) have access to information I provide?

A. If ICE has an official reason for going to an address, ICE can contact a 911 dispatch center and will be alerted that a person who is currently infectious with COVID-19 is isolating at the address. ICE does not have access to your name or any other information. **If you do not want your address shared with 911 dispatch centers, you can refuse to provide and/or verify your address.**

Q. I do not want my information shared with my employer, how do I prevent this?

A. Staff will not share your name with your employer, unless you are a healthcare worker, or if you work in another field and provide your permission for public health staff to reach out to the business. If you are a healthcare worker, staff may share your name with your employer. This is done to protect patients.

Q. Can my employer fire me if I test positive for COVID-19?

A. No. It is illegal for your employer to fire you because you test positive for COVID-19. Public health staff can provide a letter to your employer if you tested positive and you need to isolate.

Q. Where can I learn more about COVID-19?

A. People can call the Minnesota Department of Health's (MDH) COVID-19 Minnesota Helpline at 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504. You can also visit the MDH website at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html> .

Specific information about Contact Tracing can be found at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html> .

**Remember: The purpose of contact tracing is to slow the spread of COVID-19,
and to keep the public safe.**