The goal of case investigation and contact tracing is to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 by separating people who have (or may have) COVID-19 from people who do not. Case investigation and contact tracing begins after the health department receives the name of a person who tested positive for COVID-19.

### Basics of case investigation

Case investigation is when public health workers gather more information from a person with COVID-19 (a case).

**The purpose of case investigation is to:**
- Identify any person who was within 6 feet of an infected for 15 minutes or more throughout the course of a day (a contact). However, even shorter periods of time or longer distances can result in spread of the virus.
- Implement isolation for positive cases to prevent further disease spread.
- Collect data on cases and contacts to help inform if preventive strategies are effective.

### Basics of contact tracing

Contact tracing is the identification and support of people who have been exposed to, and possibly infected with, COVID-19. Asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic people can spread COVID-19; identifying contacts and asking them to self-quarantine helps prevent further transmission of the disease.

**The purpose of contact tracing is to:**
- Notify contacts of their exposure so they can take preventive steps (self-quarantine).
- Help support quarantine of contacts.
- Recommend next steps if symptoms of COVID-19 appear or if they test positive for COVID-19.

### Information discussed with cases include:

- Data privacy and the right of patients to refuse any questions asked.
- Basic demographic questions.
- Where the patient may have acquired their infection (e.g., workplaces, social events).
- Ability to access basic needs (food, medication) during isolation.
Information discussed with contacts include:

- Data privacy and the right of contacts to refuse any questions asked.
- Notification that contacts may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 and need to stay home for 14 days from the time they were last close to the person who tested positive.
- Getting tested even if the person does not have symptoms.
- Symptoms to watch for and what to do if they start to feel sick.

The provider’s role

- Tell patients getting tested that they may get a call from public health workers if their test is positive. It is important to answer the call and talk to them. Patients can get more information on Tracing COVID-19 (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html).
- Remind patients to follow public health recommendations for how long to stay home if they have COVID-19 or are a contact. These recommendations are important for stopping the spread of disease.

Recommendations for contacts

- Stay home for 14 days after your last exposure.
- Watch for symptoms.
- Get tested even if you do not have symptoms. Note that even with a negative test result, the person needs to stay home for 14 days.
- Wash your hands often.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

Recommendations for cases

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home until all three of these things are true:

- You feel better. Your cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms are better.
- It has been 10 days since you first felt sick.
- You have had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medicine that lowers fevers.

If you do not have symptoms of COVID-19 but still tested positive, you will need to stay home and away from others for at least 10 days from the testing date. You will be contacted by a public health worker who will give you more information.