

COVID-19 Definitions

Prepared by the South Dakota Department of Health

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SOUTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

covid.sd.gov

- Close Contact:** The person that has been exposed to a person positive for COVID-19 infection
 - Has been within 6 feet for at minimum 15 minutes of an infectious person OR
 - Was exposed to direct respiratory secretions of the infectious person (e.g. was sneezed or coughed on)
 - Situations that involve singing or yelling may cause people to become exposed at distances greater than 6 feet (e.g. music class, sports activities)

- Contacts of Close Contacts:** Persons that are close contacts to a named close contact of an infected person are not considered exposed. They do not have restrictions placed on them and should not be excluded from school or work.
 - Example: Student A is named as a close contact to sick Student B. Student A has a sibling in another grade, Student C. Student C is a contact of a contact and has had no direct exposure to the sick person, Student B. Student C should not be excluded from school or sports.

- DIS/Investigator:** The Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) is the Department of Health Representative
 - A DIS works on case and close contact investigations.

- Incubation Period:** The time between when you contract a virus and when your symptoms start
 - The incubation period for COVID-19 is between 2 to 14 days after exposure.
 - More than 97 percent of people who contract SARS-CoV-2 show symptoms within 11.5 days of exposure.
 - The average incubation period seems to be around 5 days.
 - For many people, COVID-19 symptoms start as mild symptoms and gradually get worse over a few days.

- Infectious Period:** The timeframe an infected person can transmit a pathogen to a susceptible host
 - The infectious period for COVID-19 starts 48 prior hours prior to onset of symptoms (or test date for asymptomatic clients) and continues until client meets release of isolation criteria.
 - Average timeframe for mild illness is about 10 days
 - Average timeframe for severe illness is 2 or more weeks

- Isolation:** Isolation is for people that are **already sick** (a positive case)
 - It limits movement of the sick individual and separates them from others so they can't spread infection to others.
 - The positive case is considered infectious from 48 hours prior to start of symptoms.
 - Isolation is continued for a minimum of 10 days after symptom onset
 - If no symptoms, the patient is isolated until 10 days after date of test

- Masking:** Cloth face coverings are recommended as a simple barrier to help prevent respiratory droplets from traveling into the air and onto other people when the person wearing the cloth face covering coughs, sneezes, talks, or raises their voice.
 - Cloth or surgical masks reduce transmission of COVID-19 infection, but their use do not exempt a person from being named as a close contact

- **Positive Case:** Symptomatic and asymptomatic persons who tested positive for COVID-19 infection
- **Quarantine:** Quarantine is for people that have been **exposed to** someone that is positive for COVID-19 infection (the contact)
 - Quarantined people may or may not become ill. It can take up to 14 days after exposure to start having symptoms of illness.
 - If no symptoms develop, the person can be released from quarantine on the 15th day
 - People that develop symptoms should be referred to their healthcare provider for evaluation
- **Symptoms of COVID-19 (Symptom Screening Guidelines)**
 - COVID-19 is a newly identified disease caused by the virus, SARS-CoV-2. Scientists are still learning about how it spreads, how it impacts children, and what role children may play in its spread. Limited data about COVID-19 in children suggest that children are less likely to get COVID-19 than adults, and if they do contract COVID-19, they generally have less serious illness than adults. While uncommon, deaths and rare illness such as multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) may still occur.
 - People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of reported symptoms – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Symptoms can include:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - This list does not include all possible symptoms and children and youth with SARS-CoV-2 infection may experience any, all, or none of these symptoms.
 - Given the wide range of symptoms and the fact that some people with SARS-CoV-2 infection (the virus that causes COVID-19) are asymptomatic, there are limitations to school symptom screening conducted by schools for the identification of COVID-19.
 - Additionally, students with chronic conditions like asthma or allergies may have symptoms like cough or nasal congestion without having any infection at all. As a result, symptom screenings at schools have the potential to exclude some students from school repeatedly even though they do not have COVID-19 or any contagious illness. This in turn may worsen disparities in students who already miss school frequently because of chronic medical conditions.
 - **Students who are sick with contagious illnesses should not attend school, but most illnesses do not require the same level or length of isolation that COVID-19 does. Excluding students from school for longer than what is called for in existing school policies (e.g., fever free without medication for 24-hours) based on COVID-19 symptoms alone risks repeated, long-term unnecessary student absence.**