COVID-19: Contact Tracing FAQs

Q: What is contact tracing?

- Contact tracing is the oldest, most utilized, and most important tool public health uses to manage infectious diseases. Contact tracing helped public health professionals wipe out small pox. It helps them manage the bubonic plague and Ebola today.

- Contact tracing is a voluntary process that helps people who may have been exposed to COVID-19.

- This process has been used in United States since 1870 for infectious diseases.

- Government cannot make you to participate. Participating is voluntary. You have a right to control your personal health information.

- By participating in contact tracing, you are doing your part to crush COVID-19.

Q: Do I have to participate?

- No. Contact tracing is completely voluntary. You are not required to participate.

- Although voluntary, participating in contact tracing is a valuable and selfless act to assist your community and state's public health efforts to crush COVID-19.

Q: Can I refuse to take a COVID-19 test?

Yes, you can refuse a COVID-19 test. DSHS respects your right to do as you wish with your health. Talk with your healthcare professional about why you would not want to take the test. COVID-19 is a viral infection that is easy to get and transmit to others. It can have devastating effects on people of all ages. Some people can even have and transmit it without knowing. Knowing your health status protects you and those around you.
Q: Will I be required to download a health app on my phone to participate in contact tracing?

No. Texas is not doing this.

Q: Will the state require businesses, churches or public venues to scan an app or QR code before entering?

No.

Q: Will the government be able to monitor my movement, or will I be monitored by satellite?

No.

Q: If I tested positive and live with my family in limited space, will I be sent to a government-run isolation or quarantine location?

No. There are no government-run quarantine facilities or locations in the United States. If you need to isolate to help prevent spread COVID-19 to a household member, please call 211 for assistance to identify available resources.

Q: If I meet someone who has COVID-19, will I be required to quarantine even if I test negative?

It depends. If you are fully vaccinated and you do not have any symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine. Or, if you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered and you do not currently have symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to quarantine.

Otherwise, you should stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19 for the entire 14 days. Your local health department may provide options to shorten quarantine. Check their website or contact them for more information.

Q: If I test positive for COVID-19 and have children, could Child Protective Services (CPS) take away my children?

No.
Q: If my children could not be adequately separated from me while I quarantine at home, would they be removed by Temporary Emergency Possession Order until I have completed my isolation and test negative?

No. Neither CPS nor the Texas Department of State Health Services will remove your child from your home if a parent or guardian tested positive for COVID-19. The public health department in your community may suggest some best practices for isolating in the home when there is one person who tests positive for COVID-19 and everyone is negative or has not shown symptoms.

Q: Who is paying for COVID-19 contact tracing?

The federal government funds the COVID-19 contact tracing process.

Q: What is the benefit to me?

If you have COVID-19, it helps inform others that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 so they can get tested if they choose.

It helps you stop the spread of COVID-19 to your loved ones and in your community.