



## Plan for Safely Gathering December 2020

### THE GIST OF CHANGES/UPDATES

Back in August, we put together a plan for safely reopening that helped outline the steps we were taking to make our gatherings as safe as possible. As we approached this Fall, we felt the Holy Spirit's conviction to prioritize gathering in person once again. Moving forward, our commitment remains steadfast to meet in person whenever possible.

As we learn more about COVID-19 and its impact on different segments of the population, we've tried to develop a plan that is mindful of the concern felt across our state and flexible enough to protect those who are at the highest risk, while continuing to provide opportunities for our members to participate in Body life to the fullest extent possible in this season. Although we've done our best to provide clarity in a number of areas, we recognize and honor the decision of each individual/family to engage to the extent they feel safe and comfortable.

With that in mind, there are some things we feel are especially important in this season as cases of COVID-19 across our state and region continue to rise. Although we understand there is a wide spectrum of views on the pandemic and how we should be responding to it, we appreciate the continued efforts by each of our members to remain flexible to the ever-evolving dynamics of this season, responsive to the guidelines we've put in place for our gatherings on Sundays and throughout the week, and understanding of those with opposing views.

Although much of what we have communicated in this document has been in place since we first shared this information earlier this Fall, the following areas are either new or particularly noteworthy in this updated version:

- Sharing guidance for members about when/how to quarantine after a known exposure to someone with COVID-19, or when someone in their household is exhibiting symptoms
- Reimplementing our initial policies and procedures for wearing face coverings in our gatherings
- Redoubling our cleaning and sanitation efforts before/after services and throughout the week
- Adding additional signage related to signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at the entrances to our facilities
- Revisiting our screening guidelines on Sunday mornings

## PLAN FOR SAFELY REOPENING

During the week of March 16th, 2020, we made the decision to limit the use of our facilities to essential activities and moved all of our Prayer Meetings and Weekend Services online. Although we tried to make the most of gathering virtually for several months, we believed it was time to prioritize in-person gatherings once again.

Scripture is clear that gathering in person with other believers is essential to our spiritual health and growth. Although virtual gatherings may serve as a short-term substitute in times like these, we don't believe they take the place of gathering with other believers in person. The New Testament book of Hebrews speaks to this:

*Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, **not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together**, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

-Hebrews 10:24-25

We have great respect for our national, state, and local leaders as they continue to lead us through these unprecedented times. As a church, we've done our best to abide by the health and safety recommendations as they've evolved over the last several months. We have restricted access to our facilities, minimized in person gatherings, cancelled or moved ministry events online, and invested significant time and resources in outdoor gatherings designed to encourage and strengthen the church.

After several months of being separated and isolated from others in the Body of Christ, we felt it was time to open our gatherings to those who feel led by the Holy Spirit to attend in person.

This document outlines many of the steps we have taken throughout this season to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19. We have done our best to consider State and Federal guidelines and develop a plan for reopening that is safe for those who feel God's leading to be a part of in-person services at this time. Throughout this season, we will also continue to do our best to offer meetings and services online, allowing each person to connect and participate however they sense the Lord's leading.

## **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS & GUIDANCE ABOUT WHEN TO QUARANTINE OR ISOLATE**

Over the last few weeks, we've responded to several questions about those who have had a known exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 at school, work, etc. While the Central Michigan Health Department (CMDHD) is doing their best to reach out to those identified as 'close contacts,' the number of new cases each day has made it difficult for them to respond in a timely manner. With this in mind, it is important that our members are knowledgeable of current CDC guidance and able to make informed decisions about when to attend church gatherings.

Although most people understand they need to stay home if they've been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or begin exhibiting symptoms, many have had questions about whether other members of the family/household also need to quarantine.

To help provide further clarity, we have put also put together a companion to this document that further defines the terms 'isolation' and 'quarantine,' reviews common COVID-19 symptoms, clarifies how long it takes for symptoms to appear, and walks through some scenarios related to quarantine, testing, and COVID-19 symptoms. This guidance will be especially helpful to those who have been contacted by the Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD) or their employer about a known exposure, as well as those trying to determine whether it's safe to attend church gatherings in person.

## **FACE COVERINGS**

When we first reopened, we placed a priority on the use of face coverings and reminded our members frequently to wear face coverings when gathered in person. Over time, we have become more lax in our adult services and other serving settings. As cases have spiked in our region and we've worked through the specifics related to isolation and quarantine after some of our members have been exposed to COVID-19 in their schools and workplaces, we believe it is especially important that those in attendance at our gatherings wear face coverings while they are here.

For those who serve in our Children's Ministry, or are familiar with our policies and procedures in place during this season, we are simply wanting to broaden the consistency of wearing masks in these spaces to our entire gathering on Sunday mornings.

We also ask that those attending Prayer Meetings and other ministry gatherings where they will be in close contact with others for prolonged periods of time please wear face coverings in those settings.

## THE '4-S' APPROACH TO GATHERING

God has entrusted us with some amazing spaces to be utilized for his glory. As these spaces are used, especially as we gather in person again, there are some principles we've found especially helpful in this season. The gatherings in our facilities are:

**SPACIOUS** - In each of our worship and prayer gatherings, we have reduced the number of available seats and spread out the seats across each space. This provides each person additional distance from those close by, as well as individual space to worship and pray. We've also removed and separated seats throughout our Mission St. location to provide ample distance between guests of our Twelve17 Coffee Roasters Hospitality Ministry as they utilize the space during the week.

**SANITIZED** - In light of recommendations from the CDC regarding COVID-19, we're sanitizing highly touched surfaces before and after services such as doors, handles, registration counters, and bathrooms. This will also continue to take place every day of the week at our Mission St. location. We have increased the number of hand sanitation stations around each of our buildings and are encouraging frequent use. We continue to sanitize and deep-clean all children's toys and play areas, as is our regular practice.

**STREAMED** - For those who are sick or caring for someone who is sick, have been recently exposed to COVID-19, or are simply not comfortable attending in person for whatever reason, our services will continue to be available online. For those who are healthy and able to come to church, we encourage you to join us in person.

**SANCTIFIED** - Finally, our heart's desire is that all of our times together be covered in the holiness, peace, and the presence of God. Please continue to pray that God would take what our adversary has meant for evil and use it for good in our times together.

## SAFETY MEASURES

- **Remind Congregants When to Stay Home** | You should stay home if you have recently been diagnosed with COVID-19, have had a known exposure to someone with COVID-19, or are exhibiting any of the common symptoms, including fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, etc. As per the CDC guidelines, anyone considered high-risk should be especially mindful of their exposure to others. Consistent with CDC guidance, a person is considered a 'close contact' if they have been within 6 ft. of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes in a 24 hour period. Those who have been in contact with someone who is a 'close contact' are considered 'contacts of a contact' and not subject to quarantine. For more information about COVID-19 symptoms, as well as guidance related to quarantine and isolation, please refer to our accompanying document.

[Symptoms of Coronavirus >](#)  
[Stay Home When You Are Sick >](#)

- **Promote Healthy Hand Hygiene** | We are encouraging our staff, volunteers, and congregants to maintain good hand hygiene by washing their hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and using hand sanitizer frequently. We have also increased the number of hand sanitizer stations around our facilities.

[Stopping the Spread >](#)  
[Everyday Protective Measures >](#)  
[When and How to Wash Hands >](#)

- **Require the Use of Cloth Face Coverings** | We are requiring the use of cloth face coverings in each of our gatherings. All congregants who are medically able to tolerate wearing a face covering are asked to do so when gathered with others in the church, while also maintaining social spacing. Consistent with prior guidance, the requirement to wear face coverings does not apply to those who are officiating at a religious service.

[Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19 >](#)

- **Intensify Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Ventilation** | We have increased both the frequency and intensity of our standard cleaning and disinfecting routines. As mentioned previously, all frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and sanitized before and after services. In addition, this will also take place every day at our Mission St. location. We have also taken all possible steps to ensure that our ventilation systems are operating properly and we will do what we can to bring fresh, outdoor air into our spaces.

[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility >](#)

- **Promote Social Distancing** | We have reduced the number of seats available and spread out the seats throughout our worship space to ensure appropriate social distancing according to CDC guidelines. In places where it is needed, we will also provide physical guides, such as tape on the floors and signs on the walls, to encourage the congregation to remain at least 6 feet apart.

[Social Distancing >](#)

## **ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES**

In addition to the precautions listed previously, there are some additional steps we have taken to ensure everyone's safety. We have...

- Modified our regular routines for communion and offerings
- Developed a plan in the event that someone becomes sick while attending one of our gatherings
- Designated a point person at each of our facilities who is responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns
- Ensured we have additional volunteers on standby in the event that someone is feeling sick or has had a known exposure to COVID-19
- Continued to make preparations at our Mission St. location so that we're able to simulcast the service from either location as needed
- Trained our staff and volunteers so that they are aware of our safety policies and procedures

## **PLAN FOR WHEN A STAFF MEMBER OR CONGREGANT BECOMES SICK**

In the event that someone becomes sick or begins to exhibit symptoms while attending one of our gatherings, we will take immediate action to isolate them from others, moving them outdoors where feasible, or to a location within our facilities that minimizes exposure to others. Once the person has been transported home, the area will be closed for 24 hours, where possible, before being cleaned and disinfected.

In the event that someone who has attended one of our gatherings tests positive for COVID-19, we will notify staff and congregants who may have been exposed. Anyone with symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be advised not to return to our facilities until they have met the CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.

[What To Do If You Are Sick >](#)

[CDC's Criteria to Discontinue Home Isolation >](#)

[Quarantine and Isolation >](#)

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PRECAUTIONS

In addition to the guiding principles and steps listed previously, we would like to clarify some additional areas specific to our Children's Ministry gatherings based on CDC guidance. These additional precautions are based on two documents that are pertinent to our work with kids: [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) and [Considerations for Schools](#).

- **Screening and Guidance for When Stay Home** | We will continue to communicate with parents about the importance of keeping children home when they are sick. All parents will be asked to check their children's temperature and additional **COVID-19 symptoms** prior to coming to church each Sunday, which include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, nausea, sore throat, etc. Workers will also be encouraged to remain vigilant for symptoms as children arrive. As per CDC guidance, children with a temperature of 100.4 or above should not attend Children's Ministry.
- **Cohorting & Social Distancing** | We will continue to take steps to minimize the intermingling of kids between age-groups and, wherever possible, keep groupings within each age group consistent for things like pre- and post-service activities, small groups, etc. We will also talk with the kids about the importance of social spacing and add visual cues to remind them of appropriate social distancing. Seating arrangements will also be modified to ensure that kids remain 6 ft. apart whenever possible.
- **Wearing Face Coverings** | Consistent with state and federal guidelines, all workers and children ages 5 and older are required to wear a cloth face covering when we are gathered. Face coverings may be removed during snack times, but otherwise should be worn while in any of our facilities.
- **Streamlined Registration Processes** | We are doing what we can to ensure registration before and after the service is done as efficiently and smoothly as possible in order to help minimize the time parents need to stand and wait in close proximity to others. We will continue to maintain detailed records of those who were in attendance in each room in the event that we need to send follow-up communication to families. We have also updated our registration documents to include a place for a parent phone number to help with getting a hold of parents during the service if needed.
- **Back-Up Staffing Plans** | We are encouraging our workers to stay home if they are not feeling well, running a fever of 100.4 or greater, or exhibiting any of the other symptoms previously listed in this document. Children's Ministry teams serving on different weeks are working together to ensure additional workers are on call in the event that any of our workers become sick and are not able to serve on Sunday.
- **Safely Providing Snacks** | We are pre-packaging snacks in individual portions in advance. Workers will wash their hands before and after distributing snacks. In those age groups that require adult assistance during snack times, workers will also wear gloves. As is our standard practice, kids will also be encouraged to wash/sanitize their hands before snack time.
- **Planning for When a Worker or Child Becomes Sick** | As mentioned previously, in the event that one of our workers or children become sick or begin to exhibit symptoms while attending one of our gatherings, we will take immediate action to isolate them from others by moving them to a location within our facilities that minimizes exposure to others. In the event that a child becomes sick, the Team Leader will contact the parents.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PRECAUTIONS, *continued*

### Specific Notes for Baby Church, Ones Church, & Totz Church

Because of the close contact between workers and children in our lower age groups, there are some additional steps/considerations to ensure the safety of all those in our Children's Ministry rooms.

- **Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitation** | We will continue to follow our procedures for the routine cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitation of our Children's Ministry rooms. Toys that cannot be cleaned or sanitized will not be used. Any toys that children have placed in their mouths will be set aside until they can be washed with soapy water and sanitized by a person wearing gloves. Any cloth, linens, blankets, bedding, etc. will only be used by one child and will be washed before being used again.
- **Diaper Changing Procedures** | We will also continue to follow our procedures for diaper changing, which require workers to wear a new pair of gloves for each diaper change. Based on CDC guidelines, workers are also encouraged to wash their hands and the child's hands before putting on gloves and beginning to change a diaper. Once the diaper is changed, workers should clean and sanitize the area, remove their gloves, and wash their hands again. (For additional guidance, please click [here](#) for additional information provided by the CDC.)
- **Washing, Feeding, and Holding Children** | We will continue to provide exceptional care to our infants and toddlers, which will include close contact as we comfort, hold, feed, and care for them. Our workers can protect themselves by:
  - Wearing large, long sleeved button-down shirts and wearing longer hair up off the collar
  - Washing their hands, neck, and anywhere else touched by child's bodily fluid
  - Changing children's clothes when soiled with any bodily fluid, as well as their own clothes if/when they become soiled. Contaminated clothes should be placed in a plastic bag until washed.
  - Washing their hands before and after handling infant bottles and thoroughly washing bottles, bottle caps, and other equipment used for bottle feeding after each use
  - Encouraging families to send multiple changes of clothes with their children when attending Children's Ministry



# Determining When to Quarantine or Isolate

## December 2020

### More Information on Responding to a COVID-19 Exposure

As COVID-19 cases increase once again across the state, we've put together this document to answer some of the common questions related to screening for COVID-19 symptoms and offer some guidance about when to participate in church functions after a known/potential exposure to someone with COVID-19.

While we hope this section provides some more clarity for families/individuals in each of these areas, we encourage all of our members to follow the guidance provided by local health officials. If our local Health Department contacts an individual and recommends they quarantine based on a known exposure to someone with COVID-19, we support this recommendation and encourage our members to follow that guidance.

### What is the difference between 'Isolation' and 'Quarantine'?

These are words used by people in public health to describe what someone should do when they stay home because they have COVID-19 or have been exposed to it.

**Isolation** means keeping sick people away from healthy people. The sick person stays home and tries to stay away from other people in their home as much as possible. Here are ways to do this at home:

- The person who is sick stays at home and away from other people in the home as much as possible. They should stay in their own bedroom or another part of the home and use their own bathroom, as much as they can. They should stay out of areas where others gather, such as the kitchen and living room.
- Choose one person to care for the person who is sick, if possible. The caregiver should also keep their distance from other people in the house as much as possible, and use a face covering, stay 6 feet apart, and wash their hands often.

**Quarantine** means keeping people who are not sick yet, but who were exposed to a sick person, away from others. Someone can spread COVID-19 before they have symptoms. Quarantine stops them from unknowingly spreading the virus to other people.

- The person who is in quarantine should stay home and away from others. This means not participating in activities outside the home.
- This person should keep their distance from other people in the house as much as possible, and use a face covering, stay 6 feet apart, and wash their hands often.

## How do I determine which members of my household need to quarantine after a known exposure to COVID-19?

We've had some questions recently about the extent to which all family members are expected to quarantine when only one person in the household has had a known exposure to someone with COVID-19. Based on CDC and local Central Michigan Health Department (CMDHD) recommendations:

- A 'close contact' is someone who was within 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes over a period of 24 hours starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection).
- Those who were close to someone who has been identified as a 'close contact' are considered a 'contact of a contact' and not subject to quarantine. This means that family members are technically considered 'contacts of a contact' and are not expected to quarantine as long as the person deemed a 'close contact' (i.e. the one exposed to COVID-19) is not exhibiting symptoms.

As a general rule of thumb, as long as a 'close contact' is not exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms, they are the only one in their household who needs to quarantine. In the event that someone deemed a 'close contact' *does* begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, that person should limit contact with others in their household to the maximum extent possible, and everyone in the household would then be considered 'close contacts' and encouraged to quarantine for 14 days from their last close contact with the family member who is symptomatic.

We've also had some questions about what to do when someone in the home has some of the symptoms listed below, but their illness seems to be more in line with something like the flu, common cold, seasonal allergies, or a sinus infection. Ultimately, each person has to use their discretion and experience to determine how to respond when they (or someone in their household) is having symptoms, and we trust our members to use their best judgement in these situations.

Although we've tried to define the symptoms and scenarios as clearly as possible, this does not automatically mean that you should not attend church gatherings if someone in your household is feeling a little under the weather. If you suspect the illness may be COVID-19, we definitely encourage you to err on the side of caution in this season. If the symptoms are more indicative of another common illness, your response in terms of quarantine or isolation will be very different.

## What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms of COVID-19 can look like many other illnesses. The symptoms for children can look different than symptoms for adults. Many children have no symptoms at all.

The following are common symptoms of COVID-19:

- **More Common Symptoms:** Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher; a new cough or a cough that gets worse; difficulty or trouble breathing; and a new loss of taste or smell. These are the symptoms seen most often among children who test positive for COVID-19. They may be the only symptoms to develop.
- **Less Common Symptoms:** Sore throat; nausea; vomiting; diarrhea; chills; muscle pain; excessive fatigue; a new or severe headache; and new nasal congestion or a runny nose. Many common illnesses have these same symptoms.

## **How long does it take for symptoms to start?**

It can take **2 to 14 days** for someone to show symptoms of COVID-19 after being exposed to someone with the virus. Some people have mild symptoms, some people get very sick, and some with COVID-19 are asymptomatic (i.e. have no symptoms at all). Those without symptoms can still spread the virus to others.

## **When should I stay home?**

We ask that our members to refrain from church gatherings if they have at least one of the symptoms from this list:

- Fever 100.4 degrees or higher
- Difficulty or trouble breathing
- New cough, or cough that gets worse
- New lost of taste or smell

We ask that our members to refrain from church gatherings if they have at least two of the symptoms from this list, even if they do not have any symptoms from the list above:

- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Excessive Fatigue
- New or severe headaches
- Nasal congestion or runny nose

Generally speaking, if you are keeping a child home because of COVID-19 like symptoms, other children living in the same household should stay home, as well.

## **Please stay home if you test positive for COVID-19, but show no symptoms.**

- Those who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home and stay away from others in the home for 10 days (isolation), counting from the day after they were tested.

## **Please stay home if you have had close contact with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.**

- If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, the CDC recommends staying home for at least 14 days (quarantine), starting from the day you were exposed to COVID-19, even if you do not have symptoms.
- Based on the CDC's website and local Central Michigan Health Department (CMDHD) recommendations, a 'close contact' is someone who was within 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes over a 24 hour period.
- As long the family member who is a 'close contact' is not exhibiting any symptoms, the rest of the family is considered a 'contact of a contact' and not subject to quarantine.
- In the event that someone deemed a 'close contact' does begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, everyone in the household would then also be considered 'close contacts' and encouraged to quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with the person who has COVID-19.
- If someone is exposed to COVID-19 and tests negative themselves, the CDC recommends they stay home through the quarantine period listed above because COVID-19 can develop for up to 14 days, even after a COVID-19 test comes back negative.

**Please stay home if someone who lives in your household has symptoms of COVID-19 and is being tested.**

- If someone in your household is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting test results, everyone else in their household should refrain from church gatherings until the results come back negative.
- If someone in the household is being tested for COVID-19, but does not have any symptoms, members of their household are considered a 'contact of a contact' and do not need to quarantine.
- In either case:
  - If the test results are negative, other members of the household are not expected to quarantine.
  - If the test results are positive, other members of the household should stay home for 14 days (quarantine), counting from the last day they had close contact with the person who tested positive. As previously mentioned, the family member who tests positive should stay away from others in the home for 10 days (isolation), counting from the day after they were tested, as much as possible.

**How long should I avoid attending church gatherings if someone in our household has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, has tested positive, or a doctor has said that they likely have COVID-19?**

If you or someone in your household has symptoms, that person should stay home and away from others (in isolation) until **ALL THREE** of the following things have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started (even if they start to feel better) **AND**;
- They have not had a fever in the last 24 hours without using any fever-reducing medication **AND**;
- Their symptoms have improved

When someone in the home has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, siblings and other members of the household are considered 'close contacts,' so they also should refrain from church gatherings for at least 14 days after their last contact with the person exhibiting symptoms. It is possible to develop COVID-19 during these 14 days, so staying home prevents them from unknowingly spreading the virus to others.

**What if someone in my household tests positive for COVID-19, but does not show symptoms?**

If someone in your household tests positive but has no symptoms, they still should stay home and away from others in the home (isolation) for 10 days, counting the day after they were tested.

**Example:** If someone is tested on Monday and gets a positive test result one Wednesday, Day One would start on Tuesday, the day after their test. That person would be able to end their isolation period the following Friday. During the 10 days at home, they should stay away from others in the household to the maximum extent possible. Remember: Even if they are not exhibiting symptoms, they can still spread the virus.

Everyone else in the home is considered a 'close contact.' They should not attend church gatherings for at least 14 days after their last contact with the person who has COVID-19 because it is possible that they could develop COVID-19 during this time frame. Staying home will ensure that they do not unknowingly spread the virus to others.

**What if someone in my household gets sick, but has symptoms consistent with another common illness, has tested negative for COVID-19, and/or has not a close contact with anyone with COVID-19?**

If your doctor or other health care provider tells you that you/your child has something other than COVID-19, such as the flu, strep throat or the common cold, or if you/your child tests negative for COVID-19, then follow your health care provider's directions about when it is safe to return to daily activities.

As we've expressed throughout this season, those who are sick should not gather with others until they feel well. This includes staying home until they have been fever free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications.

In this situation, other members of the household do not need to stay home (quarantine).

**What if I/my child has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and gets sick, but does not get tested for COVID-19?**

You/your child should stay home for 14 days (quarantine) from your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

If you/your child decide not to be tested and begin to experience symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during your 14 days at home, we would encourage you to stay home and stay away from others in the house (isolation) until all of the following have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started, **AND**;
- They have not had a fever in at least 24 hours without using any medication to lower fever, **AND**;
- They feel better

Everyone who lives in the house should stay home for at least 14 days (quarantine) after their last close contact with the person who is sick because of the potential exposure to COVID-19. Even those family members who are not exhibiting symptoms could still get sick with the virus for up to 14 days.

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Questions? Please contact [elders@gracemp.org](mailto:elders@gracemp.org).



# Determining When to Quarantine or Isolate

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### What is the difference between 'Isolation' and 'Quarantine'?

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Symptoms of COVID-19 can look like many other illnesses. The symptoms for children can look different than symptoms for adults. Many children have no symptoms at all.

The following are common symptoms of COVID-19:

- **More Common Symptoms:** Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher; a new cough or a cough that gets worse; difficulty or trouble breathing; and a new loss of taste or smell. These are the symptoms seen most often among children who test positive for COVID-19. They may be the only symptoms to develop.
- **Less Common Symptoms:** Sore throat; nausea; vomiting; diarrhea; chills; muscle pain; excessive fatigue; a new or severe headache; and new nasal congestion or a runny nose. Many common illnesses have these same symptoms.

### **How long does it take for symptoms to start?**

It can take **2 to 14 days** for someone to show symptoms of COVID-19 after being exposed to someone with the virus. Some people have mild symptoms, some people get very sick, and some with COVID-19 are asymptomatic (i.e. have no symptoms at all). Those without symptoms can still spread the virus to others.

### **When should I stay home?**

We ask that our members to refrain from church gatherings if they have at least one of the symptoms from this list:

- Fever 100.4 degrees or higher
- Difficulty or trouble breathing
- New cough, or cough that gets worse
- New lost of taste or smell

We ask that our members to refrain from church gatherings if they have at least two of the symptoms from this list, even if they do not have any symptoms from the list above:

- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Chills
- Muscle Pain
- Excessive Fatigue
- New or severe headaches
- Nasal congestion or runny nose

Generally speaking, if you are keeping a child home because of COVID-19 like symptoms, other children living in the same household should stay home, as well.

### **Please stay home if you test positive for COVID-19, but show no symptoms.**

- Those who test positive for COVID-19 should stay home and stay away from others in the home for 10 days (isolation), counting from the day after they were tested.

### **Please stay home if you have had close contact with anyone who tests positive for COVID-19.**

- If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, the CDC recommends staying home for at least 14 days (quarantine), starting from the day you were exposed to COVID-19, even if you do not have symptoms.
- Based on the CDC's website and local Central Michigan Health Department (CMDHD) recommendations, a 'close contact' is someone who was within 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes over a 24 hour period.
- As long the family member who is a 'close contact' is not exhibiting any symptoms, the rest of the family is considered a 'contact of a contact' and not subject to quarantine.
- In the event that someone deemed a 'close contact' does begin to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19, everyone in the household would then also be considered 'close contacts' and encouraged to quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with the person who has COVID-19.
- If someone is exposed to COVID-19 and tests negative themselves, the CDC recommends they stay home through the quarantine period listed above because COVID-19 can develop for up to 14 days, even after a COVID-19 test comes back negative.

**Please stay home if someone who lives in your household has symptoms of COVID-19 and is being tested.**

- If someone in your household is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting test results, everyone else in their household should refrain from church gatherings until the results come back negative.
- If someone in the household is being tested for COVID-19, but does not have any symptoms, members of their household are considered a 'contact of a contact' and do not need to quarantine.
- In either case:
  - If the test results are negative, other members of the household are not expected to quarantine.
  - If the test results are positive, other members of the household should stay home for 14 days (quarantine), counting from the last day they had close contact with the person who tested positive. As previously mentioned, the family member who tests positive should stay away from others in the home for 10 days (isolation), counting from the day after they were tested, as much as possible.

**How long should I avoid attending church gatherings if someone in our household has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, has tested positive, or a doctor has said that they likely have COVID-19?**

If you or someone in your household has symptoms, that person should stay home and away from others (in isolation) until **ALL THREE** of the following things have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since their symptoms started (even if they start to feel better) **AND**;
- They have not had a fever in the last 24 hours without using any fever-reducing medication **AND**;
- Their symptoms have improved

When someone in the home has symptoms consistent with COVID-19, siblings and other members of the household are considered 'close contacts,' so they also should refrain from church gatherings for at least 14 days after their last contact with the person exhibiting symptoms. It is possible to develop COVID-19 during these 14 days, so staying home prevents them from unknowingly spreading the virus to others.

**What if someone in my household tests positive for COVID-19, but does not show symptoms?**

If someone in your household tests positive but has no symptoms, they still should stay home and away from others in the home (isolation) for 10 days, counting the day after they were tested.

**Example:** If someone is tested on Monday and gets a positive test result one Wednesday, Day One would start on Tuesday, the day after their test. That person would be able to end their isolation period the following Friday. During the 10 days at home, they should stay away from others in the household to the maximum extent possible. Remember: Even if they are not exhibiting symptoms, they can still spread the virus.

Everyone else in the home is considered a 'close contact.' They should not attend church gatherings for at least 14 days after their last contact with the person who has COVID-19 because it is possible that they could develop COVID-19 during this time frame. Staying home will ensure that they do not unknowingly spread the virus to others.

**What if someone in my household gets sick, but has symptoms consistent with another common illness, has tested negative for COVID-19, and/or has not a close contact with anyone with COVID-19?**

If your doctor or other health care provider tells you that you/your child has something other than COVID-19, such as the flu, strep throat or the common cold, or if you/your child tests negative for COVID-19, then follow your health care provider's directions about when it is safe to return to daily activities.

As we've expressed throughout this season, those who are sick should not gather with others until they feel well. This includes staying home until they have been fever free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications.

In this situation, other members of the household do not need to stay home (quarantine).

**What if I/my child has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and gets sick, but does not get tested for COVID-19?**

You/your child should stay home for 14 days (quarantine) from your last contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19.

If you/your child decide not to be tested and begin to experience symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during your 14 days at home, we would encourage you to stay home and stay away from others in the house (isolation) until all of the following have happened:

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms started, **AND**;
- They have not had a fever in at least 24 hours without using any medication to lower fever, **AND**;
- They feel better

Everyone who lives in the house should stay home for at least 14 days (quarantine) after their last close contact with the person who is sick because of the potential exposure to COVID-19. Even those family members who are not exhibiting symptoms could still get sick with the virus for up to 14 days.

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Questions? Please contact [elders@gracemp.org](mailto:elders@gracemp.org).