Contact tracing – What it is and how it works

Did you know that contact tracing slows the spread of COVID-19 and can help keep you, your family, and your community safe? Contact tracing is a process the Kentucky Department for Public Health uses to help stop the spread of diseases like COVID-19. Contact tracing is a disease control activity that state and local health departments have used for decades to slow or stop the spread of infectious disease.

How it works: Contact tracing includes the following four steps

1. Public health staff work with a patient who has tested positive for COVID-19 to help them recall everyone they have had close contact with during the time they may have been infectious.

2. Public health staff begin contact tracing by notifying exposed people (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, not revealing the infected patient's identity.

3. Staff provide contacts with education, information, and support to help them understand their risk, what they should do to separate themselves from others who are not exposed, and how to monitor themselves for illness. In addition, they are informed of the possibility that they could spread the infection to others even if they do not feel ill.

4. Contacts are encouraged to stay home, monitor their health, and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to the infected patient, in case they also become ill.

How to help: Answer the call! 1-844-KYTRACE (1-844-598-7223)

You can help slow the spread of COVID-19 by answering the call from your health department. If contacted, report information clearly and completely. Any information that you share is confidential.

If a public health worker notifies you of an exposure to someone with COVID-19, follow instructions, stay home and self-quarantine for 14 days after your last exposure. Self-quarantine means staying home, monitoring your health, and maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet) from others at all times. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering. This will help protect the people around you.

Symptoms of COVID-19 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, and diarrhea. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, seek medical care. Severe symptoms include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.

If you have symptoms during the self-quarantine period, call your health department. Seek medical care when necessary.

These are the recommended precautions for people who have been exposed to COVID-19.

- Stay home until 14 days after your last exposure, and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others at all times.
- Wear a cloth face covering if you must be around other people or animals.

- Self-monitor for symptoms. Check your temperature twice a day. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Avoid contact with people at a higher risk of COVID-19.
- Call your health-care provider if symptoms develop.

Everyone should take these precautions.

- Wear a cloth face covering when out in public.
- Practice social distancing.
- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, or shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- Check your temperature if symptoms develop.
- Call your health-care provider if symptoms develop.

References:
- https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/contact-tracing.html

Source:

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