

Guidance on the Contact of a Close or Casual Contact of a Confirmed or Suspected Case of COVID-19

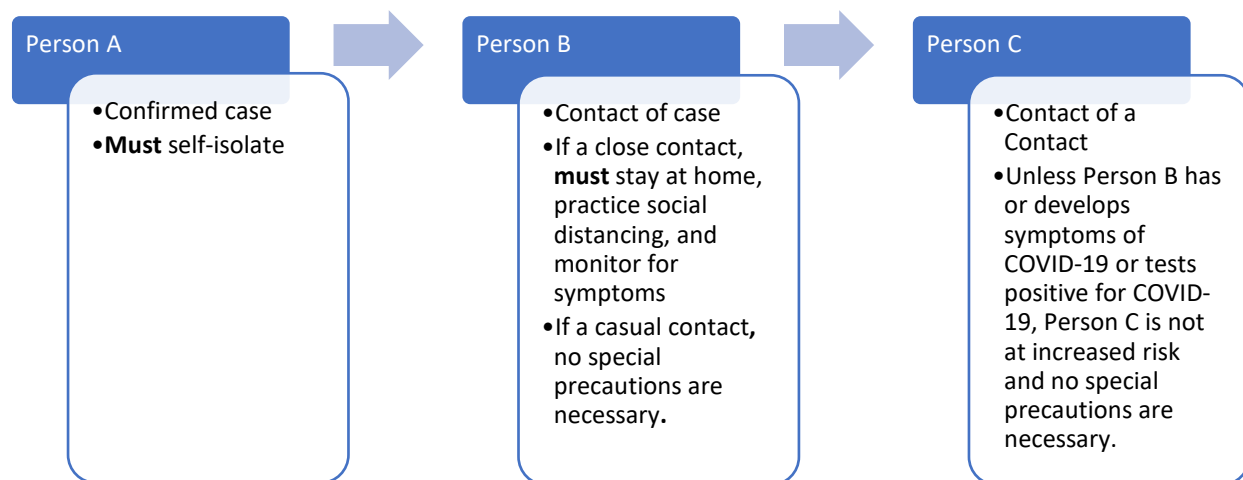
Background

More cases of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) are being identified in New Jersey. We are requesting that those individuals who have mild symptoms to self-isolate and monitor their symptoms at home. There has also been confusion about who is likely to come down with COVID-19, especially about whether “contacts of contacts” of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 are at risk.

NJDOH Guidance

Person A is diagnosed with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. If Person B had close contact with Person A, then Person B would be considered “Medium Risk” and should remain home, practice social distancing, and monitor for symptoms. If Person B had casual contact with Person A, then Person B would be considered “Low Risk” and no special precautions other than what is generally suggested (e.g., social distancing, wash hands often) would be recommended.

So long as Person B remains well, any individual (such as Person C) who is a contact of Person B (i.e., children, spouse, co-worker, etc.) is a contact of a contact. Person C is not at risk for infection and would not be subject to self-isolation unless Person B had or developed symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19. Compliance with Executive Order 107 is required for all individuals.



Close contacts are individuals who were within 6 feet of a confirmed COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time (approximately 10 minutes or more) or had direct contact with the infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., were coughed on). **Casual contacts** are defined as being in the same indoor environment (e.g., classroom, office, gathering) with a symptomatic confirmed COVID-19 case.

Examples of “Contact” Scenarios:

Household Members:

- If an asymptomatic (no symptoms) person is contacted by a local health department to be notified that they are a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, they should remain home, practice social distancing, and monitor for symptoms.
- Any child, spouse or other household members of this asymptomatic contact are a “contact of a contact” and therefore are not required to take any special precautions. They can go to school, work, and engage in other activities.

Co-workers:

- If an asymptomatic employee calls their supervisor and notified them that they are required to stay home because they were a close contact of a confirmed case, the contacts they had at work are considered “contacts of contact,” are not required to take any special precautions. They should be permitted to continue to work.

How long should close/household contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case remain home while monitoring themselves?

- **Symptomatic** contacts: Must self-isolate at home until they are fever free for a full 3 days (or 72 hours with no fever without the use of fever reducing medicine) **AND** other symptoms, such as cough and shortness of breath have improved **AND** at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. After self-isolation ends, the person may return normal activities including work and school.
- **Asymptomatic** contacts: If the confirmed case remains a close contact after symptoms develop, the asymptomatic contact would self-isolate for 14 days AFTER the COVID-19 case is no longer required to self-isolate. If the asymptomatic contact no longer has close contact with the confirmed case, they would self-isolate for 14 days AFTER they last came into contact with the confirmed case.

How long should a casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 remain home and monitor themselves for symptoms?

- Casual contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case are “Low Risk” and do not have to take special precautions. They should observe for symptoms for 14 days, and self-isolate themselves if these develop. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, sore throat, cough, and shortness of breath.
- If symptoms appear, see instructions listed above for **symptomatic** contacts.

Do “contact of contacts” need to take any special precautions?

- No. A person who is a contact of a contact does not have any restrictions and can continue with normal activities such as going to work or school. However, if this person later develops symptoms, see instructions listed above for **symptomatic** contacts.