

Exposure and Testing

How will I know if I have been exposed to COVID-19?

Whenever an individual receives positive test result for COVID-19, the testing provider is mandated to report this to the local health department, who will begin contact tracing. Contact tracing is a process focused on determining who might have been exposed based on the individual's recent social, work, and school activities - and part of this process includes notification to Roane County Schools if the individual is a student or staff member.

Additionally, if the individual was tested by one of Roane General Hospital's testing providers, then the unique partnership between RGH and Roane County Schools allows us to much more quickly begin contract tracing and take steps to keep our students and staff safe.

So, if contact tracing determines that you were possibly exposed to COVID-19, you will receive a call from someone with Roane General Hospital or Roane County Schools in addition to your local health department. (Health departments operate on where you live, not necessarily where you work or go to school, so it may or may not be the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department that contacts you even though they are the public health agency that serves Roane County.)

If I am notified that I may have been exposed to COVID-19, should I get tested?

As with any decision regarding your health and well-being, deciding whether or not to get tested for COVID-19 after a possible exposure is something you should consider with the advice of your personal health care provider.

However, it is important to understand that possible exposure does not necessarily mean that you have contracted the virus that causes COVID-19, and if you have, it is possible that testing too soon after exposure will give a "false negative." It is estimated that testing accuracy is questionable less than 5 to 7 days after exposure, so if you would like to be tested, you should consider doing so 5 to 7 days or more after exposure.

If I am notified that I may have been exposed to COVID-19, should I quarantine?

When you are notified that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you should receive information on how long you should quarantine. In general, if you are a close contact, meaning you were closer than six feet from the individual for more than 15 minutes, you should quarantine for 14 days from the last possible exposure. This is irrespective of test results - a negative test will not shorten your quarantine period because a negative is not a definitive sign you did not contract the virus, only that it was not present at a sufficient level at the time you were tested.

In addition to those that are considered "close contact," West Virginia Department of Education guidance states that class / core groups should also quarantine for 14 days, so if you are a student or regular classroom teacher in a class with a confirmed positive, you will need to quarantine for 14 days. "Core group" also includes extracurricular teams, buses, and any other groups that meet regularly for more than 15 minutes.

If I have not been notified of possible exposure but am tested for other reasons - possible symptoms, my own precautions, etc. - what should I do until the test results come back?

If you are tested for COVID-19 for any reason, neither you nor any member of your immediate household should come to school until the test results come back. This is a safety precaution to protect those around you and an aid in possible contact tracing if your test result should return positive.

If you are otherwise under a quarantine due to possible exposure, then a negative test result will not shorten this period and you should continue to not come to school for the 14-day period after last possible exposure.

If you were tested but are not under a quarantine due to possible exposure, then you may return to school if your test result is negative.