

City of St. Louis and Saint Louis County Health Departments to Maintain Initial Quarantine Protocols

Public Health Agencies Elect to Keep 14-day Quarantine Periods

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The City of St. Louis Department of Health and [Saint Louis County Department of Public Health](#) [stlouiscountymo.gov] announce their respective agencies will continue to use the 14-day quarantine guidelines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines serve to protect the community's health and safety by reducing the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Recent changes to the CDC's information allows local jurisdictions to choose shorter quarantine periods; however, the City of St. Louis and Saint Louis County are choosing to adhere to the stronger protocols to better reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in the community.

By maintaining 14-day quarantine period for a person identified as a close contact, data shows the risk of transmitting the novel coronavirus following those 14 days is nearly non-existent. Releasing a person too soon from a quarantine increases the risk they could still have contracted the virus, develop symptoms and spread it throughout the community. At this time, the virus is rapidly circulating in the St. Louis region. Loosening quarantine restrictions

could lead to increased transmission, which may lead to increased hospitalizations and deaths. Thus, loosening restrictions is not an acceptable option.

The CDC defines a [close contact](https://www.cdc.gov) [www.cdc.gov] as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period* starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. It includes anyone wearing a facial covering while in close contact. Facial coverings are a vital step in protecting those around you from COVID-19, but improper use of a facial covering can increase the risk of spreading the virus to others.

If a person identified as a close contact wishes to receive a COVID-19 test, it is recommended they wait to test until at least five days, and preferably seven days following the interaction with the COVID-19 positive person, as testing sooner could result in a false negative (meaning you are infected, but the testing platform is not able to detect the low amount of virus in your system).

If the City of St. Louis or Saint Louis County health departments determine a change to the quarantine period timeline is appropriate, that information will be communicated at that time