

From: jana.winberg@co.hardin.tx.us
To: [Wayne McDaniel](#)
Cc: [Sharon Whitley](#)
Subject: releasing from quarantine
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Judge,

There has been much confusion and many questions about quarantine, when someone can be released, and if it is safe to be around them afterwards. The CDC and DSHS Texas has given us guidance to help answer those questions.

Exposure no disease:

When someone has a moderate to significant exposure to the COVID virus, we put them in quarantine for 14 days from their last exposure. This is because it may take up to 14 days to get sick. They will get an email with instructions, and a specific date when they may leave quarantine. They are asked to take their temperature and monitor for symptoms twice a day and given information for what to do if they get ill. If a person is a household contact, they will remain in quarantine with their family member and then an additional 14 days after the family member is deemed no longer contagious

Disease:

When someone has the virus, their time in quarantine is different. Our responsibility is to make sure they are not contagious when released. We have options for deciding when to release someone.

Test based strategy: (not used by Hardin and Orange county) The person must be without fever for 72 hours, symptoms improved and then must have 2 negative nasopharyngeal PCR tests at least 24 hours apart. The problem with this strategy is that many people continue to have pieces of virus in the nose for an extended time period, even though they are not infectious.

Symptom and time strategy: (this is the strictest strategy, used for healthcare providers, and chosen to use for all persons who are ill in Hardin or Orange county) The fever must be gone for 72 hours. The respiratory symptoms must be resolved, or almost resolved and at least 10 days have passed since the beginning of being sick. And if someone is not sick (but had a positive test), it must be at least 10 days since the test.

Why does the CDC say fever free, symptoms improved or 10 days (whichever is longest)? When someone is initially infected with this virus, they shed (share) virus about 2 days before they get sick and continue to shed until they get better. The highest time of shedding is those first few days, with less virus shed as they get better. We do not see contacts getting ill when they are around someone who has gotten well.

For Hardin and Orange county, I (the Health Authority) am the only one who makes the decision on releasing someone from quarantine.

Employers may make decisions on what is required before someone returns to work. The health department does not make those particular recommendations. However, I do recommend that **all** persons wear cloth face coverings or regular masks (not N95). This is to protect other people from your moisture droplets. Since we shed

virus about 2 days before we get ill, this will help decrease the sharing of the illness.
If there are other questions, please feel free to contact me.
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