## **Covid-19: Quarantine or isolation,** what is the difference?

Updated December 4, 2020 from the CDC

## Quarantine

Quarantine is used to separate someone who might have been exposed to COVID – 19.

## Isolation

Isolation keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their own home.

## Types of tests

**Viral test** tells you if you have a currently active infection. The time it takes to process these tests varies. There are 2 type of these tests: molecular and antigen. PCR tests detect the virus' genetic material. This test is usually collected with a nasal or throat swab or a saliva sample collected by spitting into a tube.

An antibody test might tell you if you had a past infection. This is a serological test.

The CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days and recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus. The CDC will continue to evaluate new information and update recommendations as needed.

As stated above, the CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days. However, as of December 4, 2020, the CDC now recommends two additional options for how long quarantine should last. Based on local availability of viral testing, for people without symptoms, quarantining can end:

- On day 10 without testing
- On day 7 after receiving a negative result (test must occur on day 5 or later)

After stopping quarantine, people should:

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health authority or healthcare provider
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID 19.

