

# What you need to know about: **COVID-19 + CONTACT TRACING**

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## **Q: What is contact tracing?**

A: Contact tracing is a tool used by Public Health to quickly identify people who have been exposed to an infectious disease (COVID-19, measles, Ebola, TB, STDs) and alert their contacts of their exposure.

## **Q: Why is contact tracing done?**

A: The goal of contact tracing is to help prevent the further spread of infection, to identify hotspots of infection, and to protect friends, families and communities from potential infection.

## **Q: Is contact tracing confidential?**

A: Contact tracing is confidential — the identity of the person who tests positive + information about others who may have been exposed are kept confidential per HIPAA. (HIPAA is the law that protects an individual's personal health information.) Georgia's contact tracing does not use GPS or Bluetooth technology to track movements.

## **Q: How is contact tracing done?**

A: Trained public health staff work with people diagnosed with COVID-19 to help them recall everyone who they have had close contact with while they were infectious. Public health staff then alert these exposed individuals (contacts) as quickly as possible to prevent additional spread of the disease.

## **Q: How will contacts be notified?**

A: A trained DPH staff member will notify the contact by phone that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, and instruct them to self-quarantine to prevent the spread of the disease.

## **Q: What are contacts asked to do?**

A: Contacts must stay at home and maintain social distancing (at least 6 feet) from others they live with, including animals, until 14 days after their last known exposure. Contacts should check their temperature twice daily and monitor for symptoms:

- Fever / chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath / difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle / body aches
- Headaches
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste / smell
- Congestion / runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

For updated CDC information about symptoms go to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

DPH will work with contacts to schedule a COVID-19 test before their 14-day quarantine period ends.

## **Q: How do contacts report their symptoms?**

A: Once a contact has been notified that they may have been exposed to COVID-19, they can report their symptoms either by text or phone call. Individuals who do not report daily will be contacted by DPH reminding them to report their symptoms.

## **Q: How has contact tracing been used previously?**

A: Contact tracing was used during the 2014 Ebola virus outbreak, as well as in the SARS outbreak in 2003. Contact tracing is also used to combat sexually transmitted diseases, measles and tuberculosis.

**For more information about contact tracing:**

**dph.georgia.gov** or call the Contact Tracing Hotline **1-888-357-0169**

