

Guidelines for Contact Tracing

What is contact tracing?

This is the process of identifying contacts of an infectious person. It is an important part of controlling the spread of disease. Contacts who have been exposed to an illness may become sick themselves and/or may spread the disease to others.

Who is a contact?

A contact is a person who has interacted with (or may have interacted with) a person who has an infectious disease. Contacts have been exposed to an infected person (the originally infected person) while the person was infectious. An infected person with covid-19 case may have many contacts.

Why contact trace?

- To reduce the spread of COVID-19. Contacts that are notified of their possible infection can be treated earlier. They can also prevent spreading their infection by practicing increased hygiene measures, isolating themselves, etc.
- Contact tracing also allows SWTJC to monitor the disease impact on the organization. Some regions may impose legal guidelines concerning contact tracing. Public health authorities may carry out contact tracing, and organizations are encouraged to assist as much as possible.

Are there different levels of contact?

Yes. The risk of contracting an illness is higher for those who had close contact with an infected person. There are three levels of contact:

1) Close Contacts

- People who have cared for or lived with the index case or people who had a high likelihood of direct unprotected contact with respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of the index case (such as family members and health care workers) are considered to have had close contact. Examples of close contact are kissing, hugging, sharing eating or drinking utensils, talking within one meter (3 feet) of the person, and direct touching. Sitting next to someone for hours in an enclosed space (such as on a plane or in a meeting room or cinema) would be considered close contact.

Close contact does NOT include activities such as walking past a person or briefly sitting across a waiting room or office.

2) Intermediate Contacts

- Colleagues, social contacts, fellow employees who may have shared an environment for prolonged periods of time but did not come within two meters (6 feet) for more than short periods.

3) Distant Contacts

- People who were with the infected person in public places and facilities for brief periods of time.

When should we start contact tracing?

If someone in your organization has a suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19 infection, activate tracing of close contacts.

How do we contact trace?

- 1) Collect information from the infected person. It is preferable to do this on the phone to avoid becoming a contact yourself or you can send the form by email.
- 2) Record the sick person's contacts.
- 3) If there is any question communicate with the people who may be contacts of the in case to gather additional information. – Find out if they have been in proximity of the infected person. Ask the contact to confirm the time and place where they may have interacted with the sick person.
 - If the suspected contact says they have not interacted with the infected person, record it.
 - Regardless of their exposure to the sick person, ask the suspected contact if they have any symptoms. If yes, advise to seek medical attention at the hospital immediately. If needed, arrange referral to authorized screening facilities.
 - Assess the probability that the contact has acquired their infection from the infected person (high / intermediate / low / none) on the contact list.
- 4) When contact tracing, consider all possible routes of infection: – The infected person may have given the illness to a contact.
 - The infected person may have acquired the illness from a contact.
 - The infected person and the contact may have acquired the disease from a common source.
 - The infected person and the contact may have acquired the disease independently of one another.

To determine which of the above routes is most likely, ask for detailed information from both the infected person and their contacts. Note that if a contact is sick and their illness is confirmed, this contact now becomes an infected person case (whose contacts must then be traced). Be sure to collect all required information from this person.

Encourage the infected person to perform their own contact tracing outside of the organization, notifying friends, relatives, etc. of their possible exposure.

What must we do once contacts are identified?

For all those that are considered “close contact” or “intermediate contact” observe 14-day isolation from work period. You may be required to provide medical investigation data to local public health authorities.