



MADISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

To protect, promote and improve the health of our community.

216 BOGGS LANE • PO BOX 1208 • RICHMOND, KY 40476-1208
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Madison County Health Department: Local Contact Tracing Efforts

Richmond, KY- The Madison County Health Department receives many questions about contact tracing in relation to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Contact tracing is not a new concept. It is a public health strategy that has been used with success for decades to prevent spread of infectious diseases. Contact tracing has been utilized in connection with many various diseases such as smallpox, HIV, Hepatitis, and tuberculosis.

Contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease and the people with whom they've had contact with over a period during which they may have been contagious to others.

When identified, people can be provided information, education, and possible resources of support so they may seek medical care or self-isolate. When people with the disease self-isolate and their close contacts quarantine, this acts to interrupt the spread of the disease.

Information gathered during contact tracing is protected by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), is confidential and will not be shared.

Generally, the process of contact tracing follows these steps:

1. Case investigation – Public health staff reach out to a patient to help them recall everyone they have had close contact with during the time they may have been infectious.
2. Contact tracing – Public health staff begin notifying exposed people (contacts) of their potential exposure in a sensitive manner and without revealing the infected person's identity.
3. Contact support – Public health staff provide contacts with education, information, and support to help them understand their risk, what they should do to separate themselves from others who are not exposed, and how to monitor themselves for illness. Contacts are informed of the possibility they may be able to spread the infection to others even if they do not feel ill.
4. Self-quarantine – Contacts are encouraged to stay home, monitor their health status, and maintain a six-foot distance between themselves and others for a



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prescribed number of days after their last exposure to the infected patient. NOTE: Length of this time period depends on the specific person's diagnosis and progress.

Madison County Health Department nurses and epidemiology team receive reports regarding positive cases of COVID-19 from various sources: physicians, labs, providers, employers, and individuals who self-report their status. Each of these cases are assigned to a team member who makes initial calls. Another team follows up with the contacts of the cases to provide support as needed and monitors the contact's health.

With the increase in cases, the workload of the contact tracing staff has increased. Each positive case can have up to as many as 15-20 contacts. Staff rotate to work nights, weekends, and holidays to meet the demand. On July 6, the total case count was 162. By July 21, the total case counts more than doubled to a total of 346 cases.

"Considering the increase of cases in just over the past two weeks, that puts a greater demand on our team," said Madison County Health Department Clinic Nurse Administrator Anne Hatton. "They are dedicated to their work and love serving our community, so they are rising to the challenge of the situation," Hatton continued.

"Our plan is to add more contact tracers to our local team to help meet the demands in our community," Hatton said.

If you receive a call from a member of the MCHD contact tracing team, please cooperate and answer their questions. The information will help to interrupt the spread of the virus.

The Madison County Health Department continues to stress following the protective measures of frequent and thorough hand washing, social distancing, wearing a cloth face covering or a mask in public settings, avoid large crowds, and staying home if possible. The health department also reminds residents to follow Governor Andy Beshear's travel advisory.

"The health department asks for everyone's help in following science-based public health strategies," said Madison County Health Department Director Nancy Crewe. "All these measures make a difference in slowing the spread of COVID-19 virus in our community," said Crewe.



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Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If your symptoms worsen or become severe, you should seek medical care.

Severe symptoms of COVID-19 include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, or bluish lips or face.

Recommended links: www.kycovid19.ky.gov, www.cdc.gov,
www.madisoncountyhealthdept.org

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