



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Shawnee County Health Department

Shawnee County Health Department
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

Guidance When Awaiting COVID-19 Test Results

Topeka, Kan. – Shawnee County residents who have been tested for COVID-19 will normally receive results within 3-5 days. Shawnee County Health Department (SCHD) is typically notified of a positive test result within 24 to 48 hours. Upon receiving a positive case notification, SCHD will start the contact investigation process which can be another 24 to 72 hours for first contact with a positive case. SCHD recommends the following guidance while awaiting COVID-19 test results.

What Should I do While I Wait for My Results?

- Self-Isolate to your home.
- If you live with others, self-isolate in a private room and use a private bathroom if possible.
- Make a list of close contacts you have had from two days before you became sick until you isolated. Close contacts are people who have been within 6 feet of you for a period of 10 minutes or more.
- Wear a mask when you enter general living areas. Interact with others as little as possible.
- If you develop additional symptoms or if your symptoms get worse, notify your healthcare provider for instructions.

What Should I do if I Test Positive?

- It can take 2-4 days to receive the initial case investigation call from the Health Department. While awaiting that initial call please begin the following:
 - Notify your close contacts and let them know they should quarantine at home for 14 days. This includes your family members.
 - Self-isolate in your home until the following conditions are met:
 - 10 days from the beginning of symptoms or 72 hours after fever is gone without the use of fever reducing medicine and other symptoms have significantly improved **WHICHEVER IS LONGER**.
 - If your symptoms get worse or if you require hospitalization, notify your healthcare provider immediately and follow instructions about wearing a mask when you arrive at the facility.
 - If you do not need hospitalization, continue to self-isolate at home.



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As a reminder, human coronaviruses like the one that causes COVID-19 are most commonly spread through coughing and sneezing, personal contact like shaking hands, and touching a surface with the virus and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth. There are simple steps everyone can take to help prevent spreading them:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wear a mask when social and physical distancing is not possible
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick and only leave home for essential items.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Attachment: **Frequently Asked Questions Based on Test Results**

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Shawnee County Health Department is committed to working in partnership with our community to promote and protect the optimal health of all people by bridging gaps to eliminate health inequities, respecting the diversity of our community, through adaptive and innovative processes.

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Frequently Asked Questions and Guidance on COVID-19 Test Results

1. How are Coronaviruses spread?

Like other respiratory illnesses human coronaviruses most commonly spread to others from an infected person through:

- Droplets produced through coughing, sneezing or talking.
- Close personal contact, such as caring for an infected person.
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

Some people get COVID-19 without ever showing symptoms but they can still spread the infection to others.

2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- Reported illnesses have ranged from people with mild or no symptoms to people becoming severely ill, requiring admission to the hospital, and dying.
- Symptoms may include the following: 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. This list of symptoms is not all inclusive.
- If you develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, or your healthcare provider tells you that you are likely to have COVID-19, you should self-isolate at home. If you develop other symptoms listed above or other worrying symptoms that are not on the list, please consult your provider about the need for testing and isolation.

3. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways, is there anything that I should be doing while I wait for my test results.

If you get tested even though you don't have symptoms, you should continue to follow recommended physical (social) distancing practices, such as staying home and staying at least 6 feet away from others when you are outside your home until your test results are back. You should also use a cloth face covering whenever you leave the home and are around others that are not part of your household. If you were a contact to a suspected or positive case of COVID-19 you should remain in quarantine at your home for the whole quarantine period and away from others until your results are back and then follow the guidance below based on what those results show.

4. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways and my test is negative is there anything I should do?

When leaving your home, follow recommended physical distancing practices by staying at least 6 feet away from others and using a mask or cloth face covering when you are in



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contact with others outside your home. It is important to note that a negative test result may just mean that you were not infected at the time the test was done; however, you could still become infected at a later point so it is important to continue to practice prevention measures such as social and physical distancing and washing your hands frequently.

It is important to note that if you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you were tested you should remain in quarantine for the full 14 days even if your test comes back negative. This is because the incubation period for the virus can be up to 14 days and unless you were tested on the 14th day from your exposure, a negative test earlier in the quarantine period does not mean you are not infected.

5. I did not have symptoms but was tested for COVID-19 anyways and my test is positive is there anything I should do?

Even though you don't have symptoms, if your test comes back positive you should stay home and away from the public for at least 10 days from when you were tested. As we learn more about the novel coronavirus, we are finding that people can be infectious even before they start to show symptoms. It could be that your test was done before your symptoms began or that you won't show symptoms at all.

If you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you were tested you can be released as soon as you have completed 10 days from the date of your test even if this is before your quarantine period is over, as long as you remain symptom-free.

If you need an isolation/quarantine letter regarding your positive results please email covid19info@sncd.us.

6. I did not have symptoms when I tested positive for COVID-19 but I developed symptoms during my isolation period. Do I have to stay in isolation for longer?

The clock resets if you develop symptoms during your isolation period. If you develop symptoms you have to stay isolated at home for at least 3 days after your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND there is improvement in your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

If you were a contact to a suspected case and were in quarantine when your symptoms developed you must follow the isolation instructions for people with symptoms.

If you need an isolation/quarantine letter regarding your positive results please email covid19info@sncd.us.



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7. I have symptoms and just got tested for COVID-19 is there anything I should do while waiting for my test results?

You should stay home and self-isolate until the test results are back. See the sections below for what to do once your results are back.

Be sure to tell all your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Refer to the Health Officer's [home quarantine order](#) for additional guidance.

8. I have symptoms and got tested for COVID-19 but my results are negative is there anything I should be doing?

If you are symptomatic but have negative test results for COVID-19, we still recommend that you stay home for at least 3 days (72 hours) after your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND there is improvement in your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

It is important to note that if you were a contact to a suspected or positive case when you got tested you must remain in quarantine for the full 14 days even if your test results were negative.

9. I have symptoms and my test for COVID-19 is now positive what should I be doing?

You should continue to remain in isolation until at least 3 days (72 hours) after your fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications and there is improvement in your respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND at least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared. Follow instructions for home isolation found on the public health website and refer to the health officer orders for home isolation.

Be sure to tell all your close contacts that they need to be in quarantine for 14 days after their last contact with you. Refer to the health officer order for home quarantine.

If you need an isolation/quarantine letter regarding your positive results please email covid19info@sncd.us.

10. Do I still have to stay 6 feet away from others and wear a cloth face covering even after I come out of quarantine or isolation?

Since we are still learning more about the novel coronavirus and how long people can remain infectious, all individuals are recommended to stay 6 feet apart from others and wear a mask or cloth face covering in public regardless of what their test results were or whether they have already been in isolation or quarantine.