



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wyandotte County will Continue with 14-Day Quarantine Protocol for COVID-19 Exposures

Public health experts with the Unified Government Public Health Department (UGPHD) have determined that continuing with a 14-day quarantine period for people exposed to COVID-19 is the best approach for Wyandotte County at this time. This announcement comes after the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) provided options for shorter quarantine periods.

“It can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for someone to develop COVID-19. That has not changed,” said Elizabeth Groenweghe, Chief Epidemiologist with the UGPHD. “Reducing the quarantine timeline could increase the risk for further COVID-19 spread in our community. If you have been exposed to COVID-19, the best way to protect the people you care about is to quarantine for a full 14 days.”

COVID-19 continues to be a very real threat to the health of Wyandotte County residents:

- Throughout the pandemic, Wyandotte County has been one of the hardest hit areas in the region, with the highest rate of COVID-19 cases in the metro (6,803 per 100,000 population, as of 12/02/2020)
- The average positivity rate (7-day rolling average) of COVID-19 tests in Wyandotte County is 38% as of 12/02/2020. The positivity rate has increased rapidly over the past two months, from 15% this time in October.
- As of 12/02/2020, there have been 11,259 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Wyandotte County. Cases among people in their 20s, 30s and 40s account for more than 58% of all cases in Wyandotte County.
- Public health experts expect to see an increase in cases in the two weeks following Thanksgiving. A reduction in quarantine time during this period could lead to increased risk of even more spread of the virus following the holiday.

What the CDC and KDHE guidelines said

Yesterday, the CDC released new guidance on quarantine which:

- Acknowledged that the current recommendation is a 14-day quarantine period, but offered options for 7- or 10-day quarantine periods as “acceptable alternatives” in the hopes that a shorter time period would increase the number of people who adhere to quarantine guidance
- CDC acknowledged that shortening the quarantine timeline would mean balancing community risk of spread with reducing the challenges for individuals in maintaining longer quarantine period

KDHE followed the CDC guidance with a notice for Kansas:

- Kansas counties have the option of continuing to utilize the 14-day quarantine protocol or adopting the alternative, shorter quarantine periods as outlined by the CDC
- Dr. Lee Norman, KDHE Secretary, noted that KDHE still recommends a 14-day quarantine period

Wyandotte County Quarantine Protocols

UGPHD Epidemiologists and Health Officers examined the new CDC guidelines and the latest COVID-19 evidence, and determined that the safest and most fact-based approach would be to continue with a 14-day quarantine period at this time. This quarantine protocol means:

- Individuals with a known exposure to COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days after they were exposed. They should monitor for symptoms.
 - Exposure means someone has been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 (within 6 feet for a total of 10 minutes or more during a 24 hour period, during the time the person was infectious)
- These individuals should get tested for COVID-19 at 7 to 9 days after exposure, then return home to complete their quarantine, and continue to monitor for symptoms.

Wyandotte County residents can learn more about COVID-19 online at wycokck.org/COVID-19 or by calling 3-1-1.

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