

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK



COVID-19 What to Expect During Quarantine or Isolation

Quarantine vs. Isolation

Quarantine is a restriction on the movement of people who have been exposed to a virus but do not have symptoms or a confirmed medical diagnosis.

Members can be quarantined at home for 14 days with family members occupying the same residence provided that members avoid close contact with family members and maintain a 6-foot distance, self-monitor twice daily for any of the COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath), practice and maintain personal hygiene (e.g., handwashing), avoid public contact and cooperate with provincial, local and state health departments.

Isolation is used to separate infected persons who have a communicable disease from those who are healthy to help stop the spread of certain diseases.

Members who are in isolation should not occupy the same residence as family members. Fire departments should have designated isolation locations. If your department does not, family members should consider relocating from the residence where member is experiencing signs and symptoms or is recovering after testing positive from COVID-19.

Emotional Reactions to Quarantine and Isolation

It's normal to experience some anxiety and worry if you or a family member has been quarantined or isolated. Concern may center around a range of issues, including fears of developing the virus or disease, how time off from work may impact your job or finances or how to find care for children or others in your care. You may also fear resentment from friends, family or coworkers who are concerned about their own exposure. In addition, the challenge of securing basic items, such as groceries and personal care items, may produce anxiety.

Other emotional reactions to quarantine and isolation can include:

- Uncertainty and frustration about how long the quarantine will last
- Loneliness or resentment associated with feeling cut off from the world
- Anger if you think you were exposed to the disease because of patient negligence, limited personal protective equipment or delayed or inadequate department protocols
- Boredom and restlessness caused by the inability to work or engage in regular, day-to-day activities
- A sense of helplessness, confusion or ambivalence about the situation

Coping With Quarantine and Isolation

- **Follow common sense precautions to reduce the spread of the disease.** Wash your hands often and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks. Maintain strict compliance with a 6-foot distance from family members and others.
- **Stick to trustworthy sources of information** such as the [IAFF coronavirus webpage](#), the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) or the [World Health Organization](#). Choose one source of health information and stick with it, thus limiting your exposure to misinformation and rumors.
- **Create a daily schedule.** Having structure in your day can break up the monotony of quarantine or isolation.
- **Limit your exposure to distressing information.** Consider turning off push notifications from news and social media apps so you stay in control of when you consume information. Limit checking news reports to only once or twice a day for 15 minutes.
- **Connect with family and friends.** Talking on the phone, via video chat or text message, can help reduce feelings of loneliness in yourself and others.
- **Limit engagement with people who trigger negative feelings**, especially those who generally express a negative outlook on life or drain your energy.
- **Distract yourself**, even if only for short periods at a time. Choose activities to help get coronavirus off your mind, such as playing cellphone games, watching a favorite television show or movie, reading a book or working on a home project.
- **Seek out calm.** While it might not be possible to take your mind off the outbreak entirely, find something relaxing to calm your body and your mind. Relaxing music, taking a bath, petting your dog or meditation are simple, free activities that help deescalate your nervous system.
- **Get moving.** If you do not currently have symptoms or coronavirus, strive for 30 minutes of physical activity every day. Exercise not only helps improve mood but can boost your immune system as well. Consider using YouTube or phone apps for guided workout routines or take a walk or run outside. Remember that equipment isn't necessary to get a good workout!
- **If you are showing signs and symptoms of COVID-19**, it is important to self-monitor for fever, cough and difficulty breathing/shortness of breath. Members can return to work after completing 14 days in isolation as long as they have no signs, symptoms or fever for a consecutive period of 72 hours.

If You Need Support

Firefighter & Family Crisis and Support Line: 844-525-FIRE (3473)

National Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746