



[www.gallatin.mt.gov/health](http://www.gallatin.mt.gov/health)

## Gallatin City-County Health Department

### Human Services

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Bozeman, MT 59715-3478  
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### Environmental Health Services

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406-582-3120 • Fax: 406-582-3128

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_

This is an important message from the Gallatin City-County Health Department and may be the only letter you will receive from the health department regarding your pending COVID-19 diagnosis. While awaiting your PCR result, you must isolate at home until test results arrive unless you are testing for reasons other than symptoms or exposure to a positive case (i.e. travel).

Due to a high number of COVID-19 cases in the last several weeks, the health department is unable to complete comprehensive contact tracing or disease investigation. If you test positive for COVID-19 and you do **not** meet the criteria below you may not be contacted by the health department. If you need case management services (e.g. groceries, unemployment resources, housing assistance) please call our COVID-19 call center at 406-548-0123, M-F from 8am-5pm.

Following CDC guidance, we are prioritizing case investigations for people diagnosed with COVID-19 in the following groups:

- $\geq 65$  years of age
- $\leq 18$  years of age
- MSU & other university students
- Individuals identified in the test order that are health care workers, those living and working in congregate settings and the immunocompromised.

If you test **positive** for COVID-19 you **must** stay home until you meet the criteria from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be released from isolation. Please stay home and isolate yourself from others to prevent the spread of COVID-19. You may be released from isolation once these criteria are met:

1. At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms began; **and**
2. You have had some improvement in symptoms; **and**
3. You have not had a fever ( $100.4^{\circ}$  or higher) in the last 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

Please follow these other important **conditions of isolation**:

- Stay home except to receive medical care or except to attend or operate a religious facility, church, synagogue, or other places of worship.
- As much as possible, keep separated from other people, avoid sharing personal household items with others such as towels and utensils. COVID-19 spreads easily to others indoors with you.
- Stay in a specific room away from others in your home. You should use a separate bathroom if available.

- If you need to be around others in your home, you should wear a face covering and limit your time around them as much as possible. This is very important to minimize the risk of spreading the disease to your family and friends.
- Clean and disinfect all high touch surfaces daily.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and wash your hands frequently
- If your condition worsens, please reach out to your provider, urgent care, or visit an emergency room. Please wear a face covering and identify that you have been diagnosed with COVID so the healthcare team can take proper precautions.
- Additional guidance on isolation can be found at [healthygallatin.org](https://www.healthygallatin.org) or [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)

If necessary, please share this letter with your employer to determine the beginning and end of your exclusion and return to work period. Additionally, this letter serves as a release that you may need to return to work, school or other activities after testing positive for COVID-19. You will not receive additional paperwork.

**Other important steps to take if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19:**

- Please inform your close contacts. At this time, a close contact includes individuals that were within 6 feet of you for 15+ minutes over a 24 hour period during your infectious period. Close contacts are likely household members, co-workers, students, friends and others. You should prioritize close contact who are considered immunocompromised or over the age of 65. Close contacts should **quarantine** for 10 days following exposure and quarantine begins on the last day you were near that person.
  - Infectious period: begins 2 days prior to symptom onset and continues for 10 days after symptom onset (12 days total).
- You will also need to tell them, that per CDC guidance, they need to quarantine at home and monitor themselves for symptoms if they are not fully vaccinated.

**Quarantine** means staying home, staying away from others and watching for COVID-19 symptoms. Ideally, all of your unvaccinated close contacts will quarantine themselves for a full 14 days and monitor themselves for symptoms. While quarantining for 14 days is the best option, there are options for close contacts to shorten the length of quarantine as long as no symptoms develop

- **If an unvaccinated close contact has no symptoms**, they can end quarantine after ten (10) days without further testing. They must continue to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms through Day 14, follow correct and consistent face covering usage, social distancing and all other hygiene measures.
- **Alternatively, if an unvaccinated close contact has no symptoms**, they can end quarantine after day seven (7) if they have a negative-result PCR test on Day five (5) or later; or if they have a negative antigen test on Day seven (7). Close contacts must continue to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms through Day 14, follow correct and consistent face covering usage, social distancing and all other hygiene measures.
- **Unvaccinated close contacts should not end quarantine earlier than Day seven (7), even if they have no symptoms.**

**Close contacts should check with employers and/or schools for individual policies related to returning to work or school after quarantine.**

According to the CDC guidance, fully vaccinated close contacts do not have quarantine if they do not develop COVID-19 symptoms. They should consider testing at day 3-5 after the last day they were near you and monitor for symptoms for 14 days following exposure.

**If your PCR result returns negative:**

- If you are not symptomatic or a known close contact of a positive, you may return to normal activities (unless otherwise directed by GCCHD).
- If you are symptomatic, stay at home until your symptoms improve and you are fever-free for 24 hours. Sometimes testing too early can result in a false negative. Contact your healthcare provider about your symptoms and follow-up about potentially retesting.
- If you have been identified as a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, you should quarantine at home or another appropriate location and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. GCCHD and CDC recommend a quarantine period of 10 days from your last exposure.
  - If you remain asymptomatic, you may opt to take a test between days 5-7 of quarantine and lift from quarantine after day 7 (on day 8) if the test returns negative.

You are less likely to spread COVID-19 to others and reduce your risk of severe illness or death if you have been fully vaccinated. Therefore, if you have not been vaccinated, please make plans to do so once you are no longer in quarantine. For more information on quarantine and vaccination please visit [healthygallatin.org](http://healthygallatin.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori Christenson". The signature is stylized with a large loop at the beginning and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lori Christenson, MPH, RS  
Gallatin City-County Health Officer