

What does it mean to be released from COVID-19 isolation?

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COVID-19 isolation is recommended for active positive cases. Isolation means that a sick person is asked to stay at home, away from others, to prevent the spread of the disease. Exposed or positive household members may spend time together. Individuals in isolation may also spend time outdoors. Active cases must wear a mask if going out in public is absolutely necessary.

Individuals who were named as close contacts are considered exposed, and are asked to be tested and quarantine. The quarantine lasts 14 days past the last exposure. During this time, the individual will monitor their health for the development of COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms do not develop during this time, the individual is released from quarantine by the Health Department, and may return to normal activities.

Active cases of COVID-19 are considered recovered and released from isolation when the following criteria are met:

- The individual has been free of a fever for more than 72 hours; AND
- More than 10 days have lapsed since the first onset of symptoms; AND
- Respiratory symptoms have improved.

All three criteria must be met to be released. Richland County Health Department representatives contact active cases to conduct a health and symptom check daily. Individuals are released by the Richland County Health Officer based on these daily health checks, which assure the criteria for release are met. Recovered individuals must also meet any requirements put forth by their employer, which may include a negative test result.

Recovered cases are no longer deemed infectious, and do not pose a risk to the public. Recovered cases are free to return to normal activities, including work, day care, church and recreational activities.

All Richland County residents should continue to protect themselves from COVID-19 by staying home when you are sick, monitoring for symptoms, washing your hands, and cover your cough. Vulnerable populations, including those over 65 and those with compromised immune systems, should continue to shelter in place.

For all COVID-19 related questions or concerns, please call the 24/7 Information Line at 406-433-6947.