

# Isolation and Quarantine

## What is isolation?

Isolation simply means to separate and restrict the movement of a person who is sick with a contagious disease to prevent him from spreading it to others. This is a proven public health method for slowing or stopping the spread of disease and is already practiced on a daily basis with tuberculosis patients.

## What is quarantine?

Quarantine means to separate and restrict the movement of a person who is not yet sick, but has been exposed to a contagious disease, to prevent him from spreading the disease to others.

## When would isolation and quarantine be used?

Isolation and quarantine would be used when public health officials believe the health and safety of the community is at risk. Health officials will most likely begin by asking people who are ill to voluntarily stay home for a specific number of days in "isolation". They may also ask people who have been in close personal contact with someone who is sick, such as a family member, to voluntarily stay home for a specific number of days in "quarantine."

Public health officials do have the authority to require individuals to stay home in isolation or quarantine if they believe a person is putting other members of the community at risk for sickness or death.

## How would I care for myself if I am in isolation or quarantine?

When it is recommended, you can care for yourself safely at home by following instructions from your health care provider. Monitor your symptoms, including any fever, and keep your health care provider informed about your progress.

A fever may be uncomfortable, but it they play an important role in helping your body fight off infections. For adults a fever usually isn't dangerous unless it measures 103°F or higher. For very young children and infants, though, even a slight temperature may be a warning sign of serious illness or infection. Newborns may even develop a subnormal temperature when ill. Contact your health care provider for specific recommendations.

Also, protect other members of your household from illness by encouraging frequent hand washing, not sharing personal items, covering coughs and sneezes and cleaning common items like doorknobs, faucets and telephones.

## What should I do now to prepare in case I have to isolate or quarantine myself or a family member?

Each family should have enough food and supplies to last at least two weeks, including the following items:

Bottled water	Electrolyte drinks
Non-perishable foods	Thermometer
Tissues	Soap
Disposable gloves	Acetaminophen or ibuprophen
Bleach	Anti-bacterial hand sanitizer
Prescribed medicines or medical supplies	Paper towels
Baby food	Diapers
Pet food	Flashlight
Batteries	Battery-powered radio
Manual can opener	Garbage bags

Also, talk to your employer now about your options. Ask if you can work from home. Explore other options. Also, create a savings account in case you must go without steady income for a period of time.