

# Understanding Case Investigation and Contact Tracing

Case investigation and contact tracing are fundamental activities used by public health agencies for decades to prevent the spread of a disease during an outbreak.

- **Case investigation** involves working with a patient that has been diagnosed with a disease to identify people (contacts) who may have become exposed through their interactions with the patient.
- **Contact tracing** involves the follow-up and support of these people (contacts) to encourage quarantine and educate on how to minimize further spread of the disease.

## COVID-19 Case Investigation and Contact Tracing



COVID-19 case investigations are initiated when the **Department of Health receives a report** from a laboratory of a positive SARS-CoV-2 test result or a report from a healthcare provider of a patient with a confirmed or probable diagnosis of COVID-19.



Once the Department of Health is notified about a possible case, a Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) or COVID Intervention Specialist (CIS) **contacts the individual as quickly as possible** (generally within 24 hours or sooner) using phone, text, email or even home visits, if necessary. The DIS **gathers information from the individual to help identify close contacts** that may have also been exposed to the disease. The DIS or CIS also provides information on minimizing spread of disease and works to ensure the individual has the support and resources needed to isolate, which may involve working with community partners to provide additional services. If tribes or IHS are interested and have the capacity to do contact tracing, please email [COVIDTribalRequests@state.sd.us](mailto:COVIDTribalRequests@state.sd.us).



Using the information gathered in the case investigation, a contact tracer follows up with close contacts of the individual to **inform them of their risk of exposure and instruct them on how to quarantine**. Contact tracers also provide educational information on the disease and work to ensure contacts have the support and resources needed to quarantine, which may involve working with community partners to provide additional services.



Contacts are enrolled into a **daily monitoring system to check for symptoms**, either through text message or phone calls. The contact tracer will tell people on how long they need to quarantine based on local guidelines. Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>



Length of quarantine and isolation is determined by tribal leadership. Contact tracers, DIS and CIS will tell you when you are able to end quarantine or isolation,

For additional information or support, please contact [COVIDTribalRequests@state.sd.us](mailto:COVIDTribalRequests@state.sd.us) or visit [covid.sd.gov](http://covid.sd.gov).