

Roles and Responsibilities

Working together to stop the spread of disease



Physicians and public health agencies both have important roles and responsibilities during a disease outbreak.

Physicians' roles include:

- caring for patients,
- advising patients on disease transmission and means of prevention,
- communicating with local public health departments about suspected cases of disease, and
- determining whether someone needs quarantine or isolation.

Public health agencies' roles include:

- monitoring and investigating exposed and infected patients,
- providing information on the disease, preventive measures, personal protective equipment, etc.,
- helping to determine the duration of quarantine,
- providing public information about isolation or quarantine, and
- securing court orders as necessary and appropriate during isolation.

About Public Health Agencies

Public health agencies do much more than food inspections and immunizations. Your public health department must perform many functions to create and maintain conditions that keep people healthy:

- Understand specific health issues facing the community.
- Investigate health problems and threats.
- Prevent or minimize the effects of communicable diseases and disease outbreaks.
- Plan for public health emergencies.
- Address health needs for underserved populations.
- Offer wellness programs.
- Serve as an essential resource for citizens and policy makers.
- Ensure compliance with public health laws.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Local Public Health Departments

In Kansas

Johnson County	913-826-1303
Leavenworth County	913-250-2000
Wyandotte County	913-573-6712

In Missouri

Cass County	816-380-8432
Clay County	816-781-1600
Independence	816-325-7204
Jackson County	816-404-6415
Kansas City	816-513-6152
Platte County	816-858-2412
Ray County	816-776-5413

www.marc.org/emergency/mohakca.htm

What physicians need to know about

Isolation and Quarantine



MOHAKCA
Metropolitan Official Health Agencies
of the Kansas City Area

Quarantine vs. Isolation — What's the Difference?

Quarantine separates people who have been exposed to a specific illness (but aren't yet sick and don't have symptoms) from others.

Why would one be quarantined?

Some infections can be spread even before a person knows he or she is sick or has any symptoms.

Where would one be quarantined?

A person is usually quarantined in his or her own home.

How long would one be quarantined?

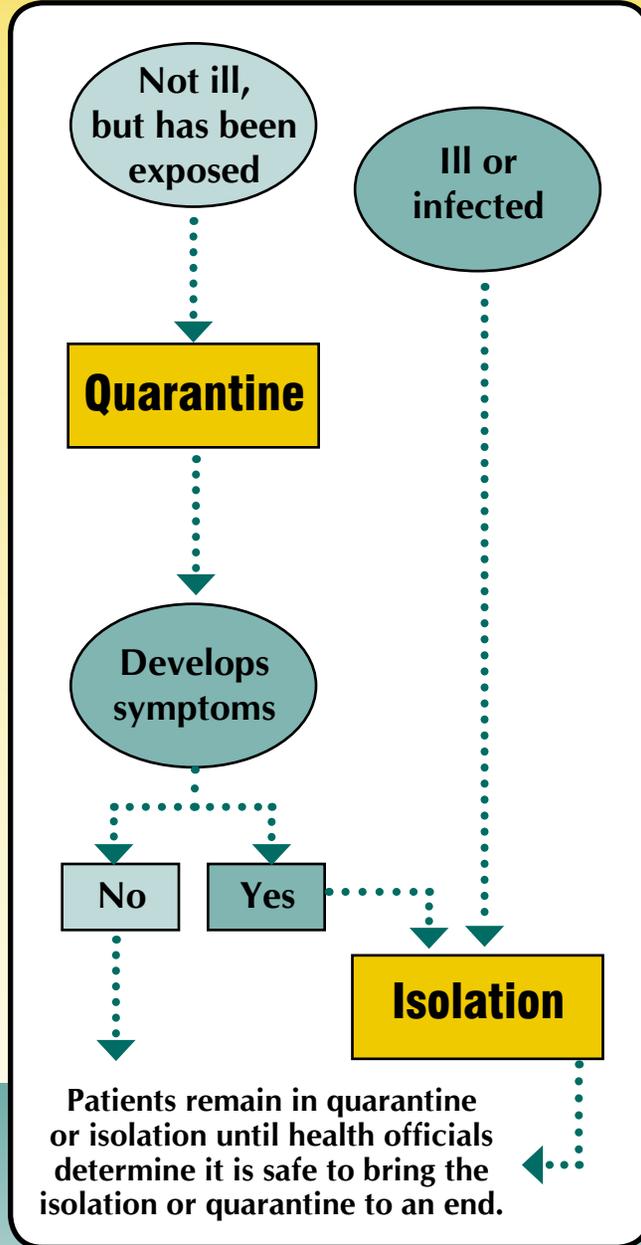
The individual — and often the entire family — will stay at home until the risk of developing the disease or its symptoms is over and health officials determine it is safe to end the quarantine. The length of time varies, depending on the disease and its incubation period.

How will the public know about the need for quarantine?

If widespread quarantine is needed, people will be informed through public health news announcements made on TV, on radio, in newspapers or using other media.

What if one is in quarantine and becomes ill?

A quarantined person who develops symptoms associated with the disease in question should immediately contact his or her personal physician and local public health department. Once ill, the individual will be considered to be in "isolation" instead of quarantine.



Isolation separates those who are already ill or infected from those who are not.

Why would people be placed in isolation?

Isolating sick people helps prevent the spread or transmission of disease.

Where would sick people be isolated?

The location of isolation depends on how sick the person is. Isolation might take place at home, but if the illness is more serious — or if the patient is already hospitalized — isolation might take place in the hospital.

How long would people be isolated?

The duration of isolation will depend on the severity of the illness and how quickly the individual recovers.

How will people know about the need for isolation?

A physician or public health official will write orders for an individual to be isolated, either at home or in a hospital, once he or she is diagnosed with or suspected to have the disease.



Legal Authority



By definition, both isolation and quarantine restrict the movement of individuals. While voluntary isolation and quarantine may be successful, involuntary restriction may be necessary in certain circumstances. To avoid delays that might put

more people at risk, physicians, public health personnel, law enforcement officials and others need to be familiar with the legal authorities surrounding these issues. Both Kansas and Missouri have given local public health

agencies the authority to order quarantine or isolation when it is deemed necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Contact your local public health agency for specific ordinances that may apply to your jurisdiction.