



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**This is an official
MS Health Alert Network (HAN) Alert**

MESSAGE ID: MSHAN-20200401-00437-ALT (Health Alert)
RECIPIENTS: All Physicians, Hospitals, ERs, ICPs, NPs, and
Healthcare Providers - Statewide
DATE: Wednesday, April 1, 2020
SUBJECT: Recommendations for Immediate Home Isolation for
Individuals Tested for COVID-19

Dear Colleagues,

We need your assistance. The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) encourages all Mississippi healthcare physicians and providers to recommend that **ANY** patient who is tested for COVID-19 **immediately** self-isolate at home until their test results are available. We have determined through case investigations that rather than isolate, many symptomatic persons may continue to work or participate in activities outside the home while waiting for test results, which leads to additional potential exposures.

A suspicion for COVID-19 that prompts a test for COVID-19, should lead to immediate isolation of the patient until the test result returns. Early isolation of patients with suspected COVID-19 illness is important to prevent additional community transmission of disease. Isolation of patients at the time of testing can prevent that patient from exposing a significant number of individuals to COVID-19 between the time of testing and the time the result is returned.

MSDH has developed a one-page document of instructions that can be provided to individuals at the time of COVID-19 testing. These instructions include information about self-isolation for the patient as well as guidance for household and other close contacts.

The guidance document is available on the MSDH website at https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,21912,420,874.html#afterTesting and is also attached to this HAN. Please provide this document to each patient you test for COVID-19.

Thank you for all your ongoing efforts to “flatten the curve” and decrease transmission of COVID-19. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Regards,

Paul Byers, MD
State Epidemiologist

Kathryn Taylor, MD
Deputy State Epidemiologist

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Instructions for Individuals Being Tested for COVID-19

If you have been tested for COVID-19, take the following steps to monitor your health and avoid spreading the disease to others:

Isolate Yourself

- **While waiting for results, you should immediately isolate yourself at home. DO NOT GO TO WORK OR LEAVE THE HOUSE.**
- Stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home to the extent possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Household members can consider staying in a separate location, if available, to decrease their risk of exposure.
- For more information about preventing spread in your home, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>.
- If you must leave home, such as to seek medical care, wear a surgical mask if available.
- **If your results are positive, you will need to isolate for 14 days from the time your symptoms started.**

Monitor Your Health

- Get plenty of rest, stay hydrated and, if needed, take medication to reduce your fever.
- If your symptoms get worse and you need to seek healthcare, call ahead and tell the provider that you have been tested for COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Practice Healthy Habits

- Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for ≥ 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand rub if soap and water are not available.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces regularly, including your phone.

Guidance for your household contacts

- While waiting for the results of your test, your household contacts should stay at home.
- They should not go to work or school and should avoid all public places.
- If your results are positive your household contacts should immediately quarantine for 14 days.
- Household contacts should monitor for fever, cough and shortness of breath and contact their healthcare provider with symptoms. If they need medical assessment, call the health clinic or hospital before they arrive.

If your results are negative (or not detected) continue to reduce your risk of illness

- Isolate yourself until fever free for at least 48 hours (if fever was present)
- Practicing social distancing
- Washing your hands
- Avoiding non-essential outings



Alerting Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: Mississippi State Department of Health
Alerting Program: MS Health Alert Network (MS HAN)
Message Identifier: MSHAN-20200401-00437-ALT
Program (HAN) Type: Health Alert
Status (Type): Actual ()
Message Type: Alert
Reference: MSHAN-00437
Severity: Unknown
Acknowledgement: No
Sensitive: Not Sensitive
Message Expiration: Undetermined
Urgency: Undetermined
Delivery Time: 600 minutes

Definition of Alerting Vocabulary and Message Specification Settings

Originating Agency: A unique identifier for the agency originating the alert.

Alerting Program: The program sending the alert or engaging in alerts and communications using PHIN Communication and Alerting (PCA) as a vehicle for their delivery.

Message Identifier: A unique alert identifier that is generated upon alert activation (MSHAN-yyymmdd-hhmm-TTT (**ALT=Health Alert**, **ADV=Health Advisory**, **UPD=Health Update**, **MSG/INFO=Message/Info Service**)).

Program (HAN) Type: Categories of Health Alert Messages.

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Health Info Service: Provides Message / Notification of general public health information; unlikely to require immediate action.

Status (Type):

Actual: Communication or alert refers to a live event

Exercise: Designated recipients must respond to the communication or alert

Test: Communication or alert is related to a technical, system test and should be disregarded



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Message Type:

- Alert: Indicates an original Alert
- Update: Indicates prior alert has been Updated and/or superseded
- Cancel: Indicates prior alert has been cancelled
- Error: Indicates prior alert has been retracted

Reference: For a communication or alert with a Message Type of “Update” or “Cancel”, this attribute contains the unique Message Identifier of the original communication or alert being updated or cancelled. “n/a” = Not Applicable.

Severity:

- Extreme: Extraordinary threat to life or property
- Severe: Significant threat to life or property
- Moderate: Possible threat to life or property
- Minor: Minimal threat to life or property
- Unknown: Unknown threat to life or property

Acknowledgement: Indicates whether an acknowledgement on the part of the recipient is required to confirm that the alert was received, and the timeframe in which a response is required (Yes or No).

Sensitive:

- Sensitive: Indicates the alert contains sensitive content
- Not Sensitive: Indicates non-sensitive content

Message Expiration: Undetermined.

Urgency: Undetermined. Responsive action should be taken immediately.

Delivery Time: Indicates the timeframe for delivery of the alert (15, 60, 1440, 4320 minutes (.25, 1, 24, 72 hours)).