

Quarantine and Isolation for Families

Quarantine

- Quarantine is a public health strategy aimed at limiting the exposure of additional people by restricting the movement of people who were exposed to an infectious disease that can be spread to others.
- In Texas, a quarantine order is to be issued by a legally appointed physician.
 - The health authority may declare a house, building, apartment, room, or other place within the health authority's jurisdiction to be a place of quarantine when a communicable disease occurs therein to protect the health of others.
 - If such an order restricting movement is issued by a public health authority, no person can leave the quarantined place without specific permission of the health authority.
 - Quarantine may be voluntary or mandatory.
- Recommendations for quarantined individuals, families, or groups include:
 - Assist those affected to obtain the things needed to meet their basic needs by using *Preparing for the Unexpected* as a guide and bringing things to a designated drop point where those who are confined may pick them up (<http://texashelp.tamu.edu/002-protect/preparing-for-the-unexpected.php>).
 - Assist those affected to obtain required medicines, medical supplies, and medical care.

- Help those affected to understand why quarantine is needed to stop the spread of the infectious disease causing their quarantine.
- Assist those affected to understand that state and federal laws allow implementation of quarantine.
- If the quarantine is mandatory, those affected may be cited/arrested; they may not leave the designated areas even to go to work, school, or shop unless given specific permission to do so.

Isolation

- Isolation is a health strategy to keep people who are actually sick with an infectious disease away from other people as much as possible by confining them to an area separated from healthy individuals.
- Recommendations for people who must manage isolation of one or more ill and contagious people, realizing that their actions will vary somewhat depending on the infectious disease requiring isolation, include:
 - “Box in” the sick person. Keep the person in a room separate from others.
 - Limit the number of caregivers who assist a sick person.
 - Use a gown or apron to cover clothing when providing care and coming into contact with the ill person.
 - Use a disposable mask and gloves.
 - Wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water, before and after care as

well as before and after removing gloves, using soap and warm water.

- Use a 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean hands if washing hands is not feasible.
- Discard things such as tissues, diapers (anything contaminated by the person) into plastic garbage bags. Drop the bag from the room into a clean bag positioned just outside of the ill person's room. Dispose of the bag according to directions from your local public health authority.
- Make sure all dishes, bedding, towels, and other such things touching or used by the ill person are washed in very hot soapy water.
- See *Infection Control Instructions for Home Isolation* for more specific information (<http://goo.gl/fQAqm>).

Recommended Preparations for Quarantine and Isolation

- Purchase and keep necessary supplies at home as recommended in *Preparing for the Unexpected*. Store a copy of *Preparing for the Unexpected* in the home health kit (<http://texashelp.tamu.edu/002-protect/preparing-for-the-unexpected.php>).
- Keep prescriptions filled for chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, high

blood pressure, etc. Always have a 2-week supply on hand.

- Have a home health care kit that contains at least these supplies:
 - *Healthwise Handbook* for self-care instructions;
 - medicines and supplies for routine and special needs like diabetes;
 - soap, water, hand sanitizers (60% + alcohol based);
 - disinfectants or bleach to mix with water to use as a surface disinfectant;
 - fever medicines like acetaminophen (Tylenol);
 - fever thermometer;
 - anti-diarrhea medicines;
 - anti-nausea medicines;
 - cough suppressants;
 - fluid and electrolyte replacements;
 - tissues, plastic garbage bags, toilet paper, disposable diapers, disposable gloves, and surgical masks;
 - first aid kit; and
 - a printed copy of *Infection Control Instructions for Home Isolation* (<http://goo.gl/fQAqm>).

References

State Quarantine and Isolation Laws. Retrieved February 17, 2007. From <http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror04/Quarantine.pdf>.

Controlling the Spread of Contagious Diseases: Quarantine and Isolation. Retrieved February 17, 2007. From http://www.redcross.org/preparedness/cdc_english/IsoQuar.asp

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