

Contact Tracing by Post-acute and Hospital Providers

A highly effective way to protect the public from infections like Coronavirus (COVID-19) is through a method called **contact tracing**. This is used to prevent the spread of infection, and to provide a rapid response to those who might be newly infected. It is a fundamental part of outbreak control, used by public health everywhere. Once a patient has tested positive for the virus, work is carried out to identify anyone who has had close contact with them during the time they are considered to have been infectious.

Things to understand or consider:

- Keep a list of all positive patients and their close contacts for tracing. An excel file sample of information you should collect for a **patient tracking log** is available at the [HAP website](#)
- In addition to patients, keep a list of all COVID-19 positive staff you encounter. An excel file sample of information you should collect for a **facility tracking log** is available at the [HAP website](#)
- It is important to collect this information when it is freshest in the patient or family member's mind. Getting a diagnosis of COVID-19 may be overwhelming to patients and you may need to "revisit" the patient or family again to confirm contacts
- Collect as much information as possible on each attempt
- Patients will have questions. Answers may be found on the **patient handout** available on the [HAP website](#)

How long will I need to collect contact information?

This very much depends on the phase of the outbreak. These include:

Contain: The early phase where we attempt to contain the spread by rapidly tracking down patients and giving the appropriate treatment

Delay: Taking steps to delay the peak of the outbreak, which could include reducing the number of large scale gatherings

Mitigate: Providing the best care for those who have become ill and supporting the delivery of essential services

The response to coronavirus is under constant review and informed by a range of public health experts and scientists.

Contact tracing may continue to successfully contain the virus, or we could reach a point when it is less useful and then the focus would then shift to providing the best care to help those who have developed COVID-19, to delaying and reducing the spread as much as is possible and to protecting those who are particularly vulnerable.

Stay tuned

