Isolation vs. Quarantine
Know the Difference

ISOLATION:

For People Who Are Ill

- Separates people who have a specific very contagious disease from those who are healthy
- Restricts the movement of people who have a contagious disease to stop the spread of their illness
- Protects healthy people from getting a contagious disease
- Lets people who have a contagious disease be cared for either in their homes, in hospitals, or in a designated facility
- Is commonly used in hospitals today for patients with tuberculosis (TB) and certain other contagious disease
- Is usually voluntary; but governments (federal, state, and local) may require isolation of people who have a contagious disease to protect the public

QUARANTINE:

For People Who Have Been Exposed But Are Not Ill

- Refers to people who, while not yet ill, have been exposed to a very contagious disease and could be able to spread it to others
- Applies to the separation and restriction of movement of people
- Is a public health strategy intended to stop the spread of very contagious disease
- Is effective in protecting the public from very contagious diseases
- Is usually decided by state health departments and state leaders

Social Distancing

One way to help stop the spread of a very contagious disease (such as pandemic flu) is to limit close contact of people with each other. This is known as social distancing. It may be initiated by state and community health leaders and include:

- School dismissal for students
- Cancellation of public gatherings
- Liberal work leave policies
- Work telecommuting
- Isolation of people who have a contagious disease
- Quarantine of people exposed to contagious disease

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Don't Pass It On

www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn

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