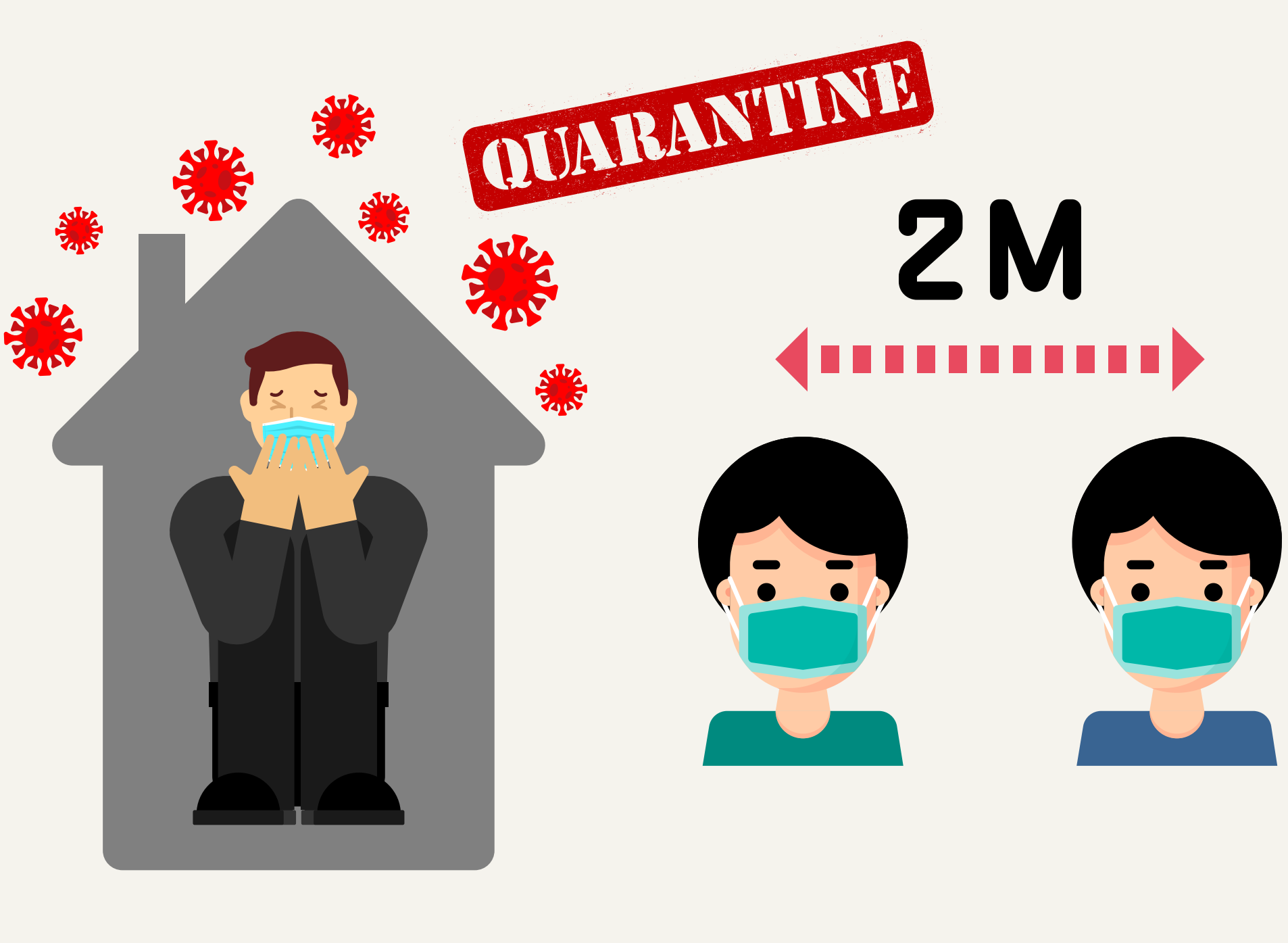
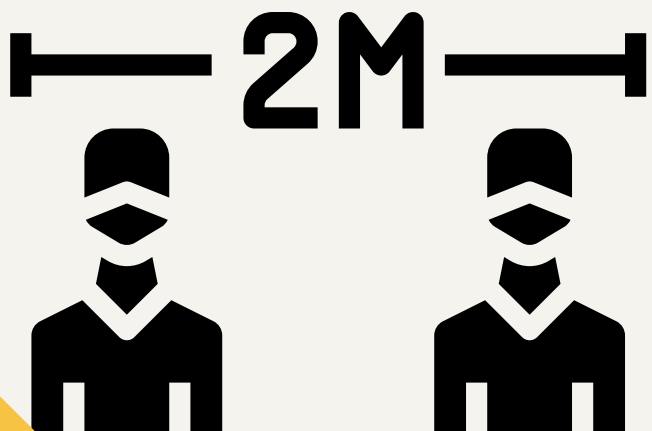
ARIZONA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN HEALTH CARE

What is the difference between Physical Distancing, Isolation, and Quarantine?



What is Physical Distancing?

- Physical distancing, also called social distancing, helps prevent the spread of respiratory infections.
- Occurs when literal ***physical distance*** is maintained between individuals.
- Different viruses are different sizes and "weights", so when they are breathed, coughed, or sneezed into the air, they '"hang out" for different lengths of time before dropping to the ground. They also "fly" different distances when someone talks, breathes, coughs or sneezes. Some viruses travel ***20 feet*** when sneezed.
- By placing physical distance between yourself and others, and by avoiding crowds, you can reduce the odds of coming into contact with respiratory droplets.
- Practice social distancing by putting at least ***6 feet*** (approx. 2 meters) of space between yourself and others. This distance is usually large enough to prevent the spread of respiratory droplets between people who are simply talking and breathing.
- Masks also help reduce how far respiratory droplets can travel.



References

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/tribal/social-distancing.html

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What is Isolation?

Isolation occurs when a person **has the illness.**

- Isolation ***separates sick people with a contagious disease (symptomatic, infected patients), from people who are not sick.***
- Isolation means staying away from other people. (Staying away from people in the community, and even other people within your own home.)
- Individuals who are sick and experiencing symptoms of illness, must take additional precautions to prevent transmission of the infectious agent (pathogen, such as a bacteria or virus, that is making them sick).

References

https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/index.html

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What is Quarantine?

Quarantine occurs when someone has been **exposed to the illness, but is not yet sick.**

- Quarantine ***separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick***.
- People in quarantine have, or may have, been exposed to an infectious disease, but are presently asymptomatic (not sick, and not yet showing symptoms). ***It is a preventative measure used to decrease the spread of contagious illnesses.***
- These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease, but do not show symptoms. Sometimes a person will go on to become sick later on, or they may remain asymptomatic, but still be able to spread the illness.
- Different illnesses have different "incubation periods" (the time frame from exposure, to when the individual begins to show symptoms). For example, COVID incubates for 2-14 days, and Ebola incubates for up to 21 days.

References

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