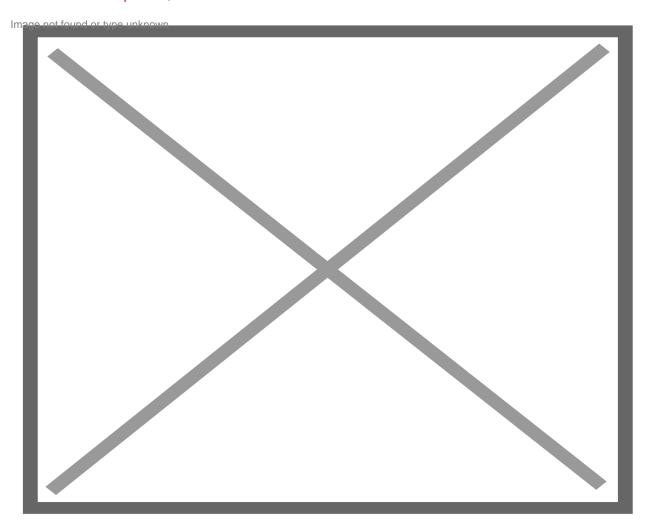# 'Fully Recovered' From COVID-19 is Defined as 72 Hours Without Symptom, Seven to Ten Days Since Symptoms First Appeared. But Does it Mean No Longer Contagious?

Coronavirus / **Published On April 01, 2020 08:31 AM /**

Robert Moore April 01, 2020

Thirty people across the Virgin Islands — including eight members of one family — have been infected by the novel coronavirus as of Tuesday evening. Public health officials said 19 of those infected by the highly contagious COVID-19 have fully recovered and no longer display the tell-tale symptoms of fever, dry cough and shortness of breath.

But what, exactly, does a full recovery mean? And how do the territory's health officials define full recovery from a deadly disease about which so little is known?

Initially, individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 were ordered to quarantine at home until symptoms subsided and a second round of testing returned negative results. That is no longer the case.

According to local public health officials, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has evolved on the question of what defines recovery in the midst of this global health crisis. "The Department of Health follows the CDC guidance," said Government House spokesman Richard Motta. And that guidance no longer calls for retesting of people who had tested positive and were on the road back to health.

"They determine it (full recovery) in two ways," Mr. Motta said, after consulting with the V.I. Department of Health. "You are cleared and considered negative if you've had at least three days since the resolution of your fever, without the use fever-reducing medications, and improvement in respiratory symptoms, which include cough and shortness of breath. The second metric used is that at least seven to 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared."

For the majority of people who become infected, the coronavirus brings only mild symptoms. The World Health Organization says those who experience more severe illness could take up to six weeks or more to recover. In the most serious of cases, COVID-19 can be fatal. A total of 190 people in the territory have been tested for coronavirus, with 123 tests coming back negative, 30 positives and results for 24 still out. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says there are 163,539 cases across the United States and territories, including the V.I. As of Tuesday, 2,860 people in the U.S. had died from the disease.

Everyone of those numbers are expected to rise dramatically. The VI Department of Health was expected to begin local testing for the coronavirus. The department will have the capacity to test 30 people per day, and within a few weeks, will be able to test up to 1,000 suspected cases daily. At its peak, based on VIDOH projections, more than 100 people in the territory could be hospitalized with COVID-19 infection, Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion said recently.

Nationally, Pres. Trump's Coronavirus Task Force painted a grim picture of the country during the next few months. American should brace for 100,000 deaths in the coming months, maybe as many as 200,000, the federal response team warned on Tuesday.