Diner Contact Tracing

Slowing the Spread by Speeding the Notification Process

Restaurant dining guidelines have changed frequently during the pandemic. The latest twist is contact tracing. Here's what you need to know and how to do it:

What is contact tracing?

It's a tool to help slow the spread of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19, by collecting information from your guests. It provides accountability and assists the health department in the event of an outbreak.
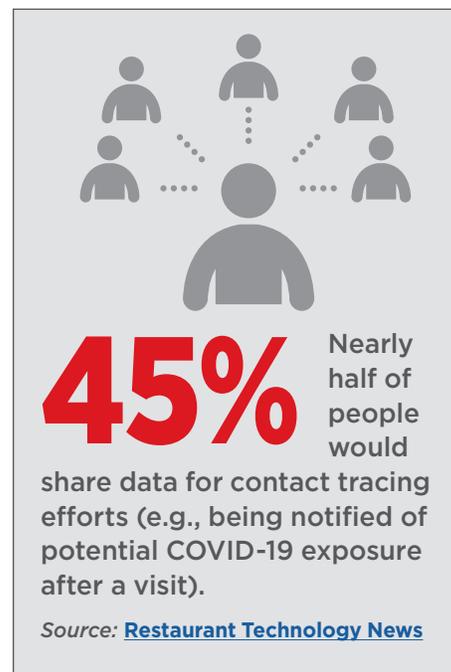
How does it work?

- Guest names, phone numbers (or addresses) and day and time of visit are collected.

- If there is a positive COVID-19 test or an outbreak linked to the business, people with potential exposure can be contacted about getting a test.

Do I have to do it?

- **Yes —** if your state or municipality mandates a contact-tracing system.

- **Maybe —** if your business decides it's a best practice for slowing the spread of COVID-19 and keeping your staff and customers informed.

- **Beware —** where laws apply, failure to comply could mean fines or licensing problems.

What about privacy concerns?

- **Train** your front-of-the-house staff on how to handle guests' objections and when to raise situations to management.

- **Secure** customer data (on cards kept in a lock box or using technology security).

- **Know** how long to keep data (some areas mandate a number of days).

- **Protect** customer privacy (never share or add to your marketing database unless the customer explicitly opts in).

45% Nearly half of people would share data for contact tracing efforts (e.g., being notified of potential COVID-19 exposure after a visit).

Source: **Restaurant Technology News**

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How do I collect information?

Generate a QR Code

Create a simple form in Google, Excel or Survey Monkey and ask each person to scan the code and enter information. You can also have a digital tablet at the entrance for people without smartphones. Use the VIPinsider free QR Code generator or generate one of your own.

Use a reservation system

Reservation tracking systems, such as OpenTable, collect guest information. Some platforms can be used on an iPad or other tablet for self-check-in.

Make it fun

Collect information on a raffle ticket to be entered into a weekly drawing, and give out gift cards as prizes. Everyone just needs to drop a ticket into a secure raffle box.

Have a paper form

Have your server collect diners' information on a simple form (think index card) before ordering. This can prevent crowds at the entrance during busy times. Also, ask diners if they want to join your restaurant's email list for alerts about upcoming specials.

Rely on your POS system

Instead of entering Patron 1, Patron 2, etc., have the server enter each person's name and phone number in your POS ordering system. This is a good way to organize paper forms.

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