

CDC Updates and Shortens Recommended Isolation and Quarantine Period for General Population

Updated with add on recommendations from 1/3/22

Given what we currently know about COVID-19 and the Omicron variant, CDC is shortening the recommended time for isolation from 10 days for people with COVID-19 to 5 days, if asymptomatic, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others. The change is motivated by science demonstrating that the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after. Therefore, **people who test positive should isolate for 5 days and, if they have access to rapid antigen testing, consider testing on Day 5. If they test positive, they should remain in isolation for an additional 10 days. If they test negative and are asymptomatic at that time (or symptoms improved/ no fevers), they may leave isolation if they can continue to mask for 5 days to minimize the risk of infecting others.**

Additionally, CDC is updating the recommended quarantine period for those [exposed to COVID-19](#). For people who are **unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second mRNA dose** (or more than 2 months after the J&J vaccine) **and not yet boosted**, CDC now recommends quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days. Alternatively, if a 5-day quarantine is not feasible, it is imperative that an exposed person [wear a well-fitting mask](#) at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure.

Individuals who have received their booster shot do not need to quarantine following an exposure, but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test (PCR or rapid antigen/molecular) for SARS-CoV-2 at **day 5 after exposure**. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

Close contact exposures should wear a well-fitting mask over mouth and nose AT ALL TIMES when with another person (including in the home). Care should be taken to remain away from immunocompromised or immunosuppressed persons, and eating/drinking in the presence of others (where the mask would be removed to eat/drink).

Isolation relates to behavior after a confirmed infection. Isolation for 5 days followed by wearing a well-fitting mask will minimize the risk of spreading the virus to others. Quarantine refers to the time following exposure to the virus or close contact with someone known to have COVID-19. Both updates come as the Omicron variant continues to spread throughout

the U.S. and reflects the current science on when and for how long a person is maximally infectious.

Data from South Africa and the United Kingdom demonstrate that vaccine effectiveness against infection for two doses of an mRNA vaccine is approximately 35%. A COVID-19 vaccine booster dose restores vaccine effectiveness against infection to 75%. COVID-19 vaccination decreases the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. CDC strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 5 and older and boosters for everyone 16 and older. Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

IF YOU ARE POSITIVE:

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status.

- Stay home for 5 days- test on day 5 if you have access to a rapid antigen test.
- If your test is positive, please remain in isolation for an additional 5 days.
- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house- preferably with a negative test
- Continue to strictly wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

If You Were Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)

If you:

Have been boosted

OR

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months

OR

Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months

- **Wear a mask around others for 10 days.**
- Test on day 5, if possible

If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home.

If you:

Completed the primary series of **Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted**

OR

Completed the primary series of **J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted**

OR

Are **unvaccinated**

- Stay home for 5 days. After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If you can't quarantine you must wear a mask for 10 days.
- Test on day 5 if possible.

If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home