

HEALTH ALERT

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Updated Guidance for Duration of Isolation

July 20, 2020

Summary and Action Items

- On July 17, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated [guidance for duration of isolation and precautions for COVID-19](#).
- For most persons with COVID-19, isolation and precautions can generally be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications and with improvement in other symptoms.
- For persons with [severe to critical illness](#) or who are severely immunocompromised, the recommended duration of isolation and precautions was extended to 20 days after symptom onset (or, for asymptomatic severely immunocompromised persons, 20 days after their initial positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test).
- For persons previously diagnosed with COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, retesting is not recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection (or, for persons who never developed symptoms, the date of the first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2).
- CDC has provided a summary of current evidence and rationale for these changes [here](#).

Discontinuation of Isolation in Non-Healthcare Settings

On July 17, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings](#).

- Symptom-based criteria were modified as follows: changed from “at least 72 hours” to “at least 24 hours” have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and changed from “improvement in respiratory symptoms” to “improvement in symptoms” to address the expanding [list of symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19.

Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions

On July 17, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings](#).

- Except for rare situations, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to determine when to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions.
- Symptom-based criteria were modified as follows: changed from “at least 72 hours” to “at least 24 hours” have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and changed from “improvement in respiratory symptoms” to “improvement in symptoms” to address the expanding [list of symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19.
- For patients with [severe to critical illness](#) or who are [severely immunocompromised](#), the recommended duration for Transmission-Based Precautions was extended to 20 days after symptom

onset (or, for asymptomatic severely immunocompromised patients, 20 days after their initial positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test).

Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel

On July 17, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#).

- Except for rare situations, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended to determine when to allow healthcare personnel to return to work.
- Symptom-based criteria were modified as follows: changed from “at least 72 hours” to “at least 24 hours” have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and changed from “improvement in respiratory symptoms” to “improvement in symptoms” to address the expanding [list of symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19.
- For healthcare personnel with [severe to critical illness](#) or who are [severely immunocompromised](#), the recommended duration for work exclusion was extended to 20 days after symptom onset (or, for asymptomatic severely immunocompromised healthcare personnel, 20 days after their initial positive SARS-CoV-2 diagnostic test).

After Discontinuation of Isolation

- For persons previously diagnosed with COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, retesting is not recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection.
- For persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by the provider, then the person may warrant retesting; consultation with infectious disease or infection control experts is recommended. Isolation may be considered during this evaluation based on consultation with an infection control expert, especially in the event symptoms develop within 14 days after close contact with an infected person.
- Persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 more than 3 months after the date of symptom onset of the most recent illness episode should be retested. Persons with recurrent symptoms after the first 3 months who test positive should be considered infectious and remain isolated until they again meet criteria for discontinuation of isolation and precautions for COVID-19.
- A person who has clinically recovered from COVID-19 and then is identified as a contact of a new case within 3 months of symptom onset of their most recent illness does not need to be quarantined or retested for SARS-CoV-2. However, if a person is identified as a contact of a new case 3 months or more after symptom onset, they should follow quarantine recommendations for contacts.
- For persons who never developed symptoms, the date of the first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 should be used in place of the date of symptom onset.
- Sources: [Duration of Isolation and Precautions for Adults with COVID-19](#) and [Clinical Questions about COVID-19: Questions and Answers](#).

Contact

Report all confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 within 24 hours of case identification to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the case resides. To locate a local health department, please visit <https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/lhdinformationsystem/Directory/GetMyLHD>.

For general questions related to COVID-19, healthcare providers and facilities should contact their local health department. Ohio local health departments should contact the ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases at 614-995-5599.