

COVID 19

CDC Recommendations

August 11, 2022

Union Briefing

October 2022



CDC has streamlined its COVID-19 guidance to help people better understand their risk, how to protect themselves and others, what actions to take if exposed to COVID-19, and what actions to take if they are sick or test positive for the virus.

COVID-19 continues to circulate globally, however, with so many tools available to us for reducing COVID-19 severity, there is significantly less risk of severe illness, hospitalization and death compared to earlier in the pandemic.

In support of its updated guidance, the CDC is:

1. Continuing to promote the importance of being up to date with vaccination to protect people against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Protection provided by the current vaccine against symptomatic infection and transmission is less than that against severe disease and diminishes over time, especially against the currently circulating variants. For this reason, it is important to stay up to date, especially as new vaccines become available.
2. Updating its guidance for people who are not up to date on COVID-19 vaccines on what to do if exposed to someone with COVID-19. This is consistent with the existing CDC guidance for people who are up to date on COVID-19 vaccines.
3. Recommending that instead of quarantining if you were exposed to COVID-19, you wear a high-quality mask for 10 days and get tested on day 5.
4. Reiterating that regardless of vaccination status, you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19.
 1. You should also isolate if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results.
 1. If your results are positive, follow CDC's full isolation recommendations.
 2. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.
5. Recommending that if you test positive for COVID-19, you stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home. You are likely most infectious during these first 5 days. Wear a high-quality mask when you must be around others at home and in public.
 1. If after 5 days you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of medication, and your symptoms are improving, or you never had symptoms, you may end isolation after day 5.
 2. Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19 until at least day 11.
 3. You should wear a high-quality mask through day 10.
6. Recommending that if you had moderate illness (if you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing) or severe illness (you were hospitalized) due to COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system, you need to isolate through day 10.
7. Recommending that if you had severe illness or have a weakened immune system, consult your doctor before ending isolation. Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you. If you are unsure if your symptoms are moderate or severe or if you have a weakened immune system, talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.
8. Clarifying that after you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.
9. Recommending screening testing of asymptomatic people without known exposures will no longer be recommended in most community settings.
10. Emphasizing that physical distance is just one component of how to protect yourself and others. It is important to consider the risk in a particular setting, including local COVID-19 Community Levels and the important role of ventilation, when assessing the need to maintain physical distance.
11. CDC now recommends case investigation and contact tracing only in health care settings and certain high-risk congregate settings. In all other circumstances, public health efforts can focus on case notification and provision of information and resources to exposed persons about access to testing. Persons who have had recent confirmed or suspected exposure to an infected person should wear a mask for 10 days around others when indoors in public and should receive testing ≥ 5 days after exposure (or sooner, if they are symptomatic), irrespective of their vaccination status.

USPS Updates to Comply with New Guidance

- Removing all Standard Work Instructions involving Social Distancing.
- Termination of the MOU with the APWU regarding DSI training.
- Cessation of Close Contact Tracing by our Occupational Health Nurse Administrators.
- Update to practices and guidance contained in the Decision Tree.
- Agreement on how to handle any employee who claims to be a close contact exposure (including living with someone who's COVID positive). The new CDC guidance does not recommend quarantine, but rather the wearing of a high-quality face covering for 10 days and testing after 5 days for asymptomatic individuals.