



Date: January 14, 2022

To: Local Health Departments, School districts, Congregate Care Settings, Healthcare Providers

**Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance**

**Please distribute immediately to:**

Communicable Disease Control, Commissioner or Public Health Director, School District Administrators, School Nurses, Congregate Care Setting Directors

**Background**

New York State is experiencing record numbers of COVID-19 cases and extremely high hospitalizations ([New York State COVID-19 data](#)) that are stressing healthcare system and public health response capacity.

Between December 27, 2021 and January 10, 2022, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued several updates to its recommendations for [isolation and quarantine associated with COVID-19 infection or exposure](#). In addition to recommendations for the general public, specific recommendations for certain groups such as healthcare workers and those who work at or attend school have been released.

CDC has indicated that additional guidance for other special settings including higher education and certain types of congregate living will be issued in the future.

After careful review of the [evidence](#) CDC used to inform these recommendations as well as case and hospitalization rates in New York, NYSDOH is aligning with CDC's updated isolation and quarantine guidance, with particular exceptions or clarifications as described below.

This guidance supersedes the essential worker portion of the December 24, 2021 NYSDOH Shortened Isolation guidance, although the portion of that guidance for healthcare workers remains in effect (see [Return-to-Work Protocols for Personnel in Healthcare Settings](#)). This guidance also supersedes the January 4, 2022 NYSDOH document entitled Interim Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance.

The January 4, 2022 NYSDOH [Interim Advisory on Return-to-Work Protocols for Healthcare Workers](#) remains in effect.

## New York State Approach to COVID-19 Quarantine

### Who does **Not** Have to Quarantine After Close Contact with Someone With COVID-19?

- Anyone ages 12 or older and who has received all [CDC recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses](#), including [boosters if eligible](#) and [additional primary shots](#) for some immunocompromised people.
- Anyone ages 5-11 years old who has completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Anyone who has had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (tested positive using a [viral test](#), e.g. antigen or PCR).

### What To Do if Not Subject to Quarantine:

- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).
- [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after the date of last close contact with someone with COVID-19. If test is positive or COVID-19 symptoms develop, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the **Isolation section** of this guidance document.
- Anyone who had COVID-19 within the last 90 days and has since recovered and remained symptom free, does not need to get tested after close contact with someone with COVID-19.

### Who **Has** to Quarantine After Close Contact With Someone With COVID-19?

- Anyone ages 12 or older who has completed the [primary series](#) of recommended vaccine, and is eligible for a [CDC recommended](#) booster shot but has not received it.
  - However, these individuals may attend or work at school, where multi-layer mitigation strategies are in place. See **School (K-12) section** document for further guidance.
- Anyone who has not completed a [primary vaccine series](#).
- Anyone who is not vaccinated.

### How to Quarantine

- Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after the date of the last contact with a person who has COVID-19. The date of contact (exposure) is considered day 0.
- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home, if possible.
- For 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19, watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If symptoms develop, [get tested](#) immediately and isolate until test results arrive. If test result is positive, follow recommendations in the **Isolation section** of this guidance document.
- If symptoms do not develop, [get tested](#) at least 5 days after the date of last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
  - If test results are negative, quarantine can end, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home and in public until 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
  - If test results are positive, isolate for at least 5 days from the date of the positive test (date of test, not date results received).

- Quarantined individuals should make every effort to get tested at least 5 days after exposure, even if asymptomatic. If it is not possible to get a test 5 days after the last close contact with someone with COVID-19, quarantine can end after day 5 if there have been **NO COVID-19 symptoms** throughout the 5-day period. Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home and in public until 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If possible, stay away from people in the home, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19, as well as others outside the home throughout the full 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- All children under the age of 2 years, who are not recommended to wear masks, as well as others who cannot wear a well-fitting mask for any reason should continue to quarantine for 10 days. During this time, avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), or living in nursing homes and other high-risk settings.
- Do not travel during the 5-day quarantine period. Before resuming travel, get tested at least 5 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19, receive a negative test result, and be symptom free for all 5 days of quarantine. If it is not possible to get a test, delay travel until 10 days after the date of the last close contact with a person with COVID-19. If travel must occur before the 10 days are completed, continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others for the entire duration of travel during the 10 days. Anyone unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where wear a mask cannot be worn, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until after 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

#### After Quarantine

- Watch for symptoms until 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and [get tested](#).

#### **Quarantine Exception for Schools (K-12)**

Exposed fully vaccinated students, teachers, and staff who must quarantine because they did not receive a CDC recommended booster when eligible **can attend or work at school** during the quarantine period where masking, distancing, etc. is monitored and enforced. However, these individuals must continue to quarantine as otherwise required outside of academic instruction periods in school. Extra-curricular, after-school, or community activities are not permitted during quarantine. Individuals attending or working at a school with a test-to-stay program should participate in that program. If the school does not have a test-to-stay program, then it is strongly encouraged that these individuals test at days 2-3 (or the first school day after the exposure is identified) and day 5.

This guidance also applies to pre-K classes when located in schools with older grades, but it does not apply to other early childhood care settings.

## New York State Approach to COVID-19 Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.

### Who Has to Isolate?

People who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status. This includes:

- People who have a [positive viral test](#) (e.g. antigen or PCR) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have [symptoms](#).
- People with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

### How to Isolate

- Stay home, in a separate room from other household members if possible, for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the day of the positive test for asymptomatic persons).
- Use a separate bathroom if available.
- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when it is not possible to be separate from others in the home.
- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Take steps to [improve ventilation at home](#), if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.

### Ending Isolation

*For people who had symptoms but were not hospitalized for COVID-19*

- Isolation ends after 5 full days if the individual is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved (Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).
- Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of the 5-day isolation period.
- All children under the age of 2 years, who are not recommended to wear masks, as well as others who cannot wear a well-fitting mask for any reason, must isolate for a full 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If fever continues or other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, continue to isolate until there is no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved. Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others in the home. Consider contacting a healthcare provider.
- Do not travel during the 5-day isolation period. After isolation ends, avoid travel until a full 10 days after the first day of symptoms. If travel on days 6-10 cannot be avoided, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others for the entire duration of travel. Anyone unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.

- Do not go to places where wear a mask cannot be worn, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until after 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Testing to end isolation is not required. If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#)<sup>1</sup> towards the end of the 5-day isolation period if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If test result is positive, continue to isolate until day 10. If test result is negative, isolation can end, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.

*For people who did not have symptoms*

- Isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of the positive test and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test.
- Isolation ends after 5 full days if no symptoms develop.
- Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10).
- All children under the age of 2 years, who are not recommended to wear masks, as well as others who cannot wear a well-fitting mask for any reason, must isolate for a full 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If [symptoms](#) develop after testing positive, the **5-day isolation period should start over**. Day 0 is the first day of symptoms. **Follow the recommendations above for ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms.**
- Do not travel during the 5-day isolation period. After isolation ends, avoid travel until a full 10 days after the first day of symptoms. If travel on days 6-10 cannot be avoided, continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others for the entire duration of travel. Anyone unable to wear a mask should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where wear a mask cannot be worn, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until after 10 days after the date of the last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Testing to end isolation is not required. If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#) towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. If test result is positive, continue to isolate until day 10. If test result is negative, isolation can end, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.

*For people who are hospitalized for COVID-19 or are immunocompromised*

People who are hospitalized for COVID-19 and people with [compromised immune systems](#) might need to isolate longer. They may also require testing with a [viral test](#) (e.g. antigen or PCR) to determine when they can be around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 and for [people with weakened immune systems](#). Consult with a healthcare provider about ending isolation.

People who are immunocompromised should talk to their healthcare provider about the potential for reduced immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines and the need to continue to follow [current](#)

[prevention measures](#) (including wearing a [well-fitting mask](#), [staying 6 feet apart from others](#) they don't live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) to protect themselves against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider. Close contacts of immunocompromised people – including household members – should also be encouraged to receive all [recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) to help protect these people.

## **Quarantine and Isolation for Congregate Settings and Special Populations**

Correctional Facilities, Adult Care Facilities, Group Homes, Other Congregate Settings  
CDC's recommendations for shortened quarantine and isolation **does not** apply to correctional facilities, detention facilities, homeless shelters, and cruise ships. Those settings, as well as other congregate settings with high-risk individuals or at high risk for transmission, should continue to follow previous guidance for a 10-day quarantine or isolation for residents/clients. Other congregate settings that should continue to implement 10-day quarantine or isolation for residents/clients include adult care facilities, OPWDD facilities, and some OMH facilities, depending on ability of residents/clients in the OMH facilities to wear a mask, socially distance, and follow other mitigation measures.

While staff in these same facilities can isolate or quarantine for 5 days according to the guidance in this document, they should furlough (not work) for 10-days following infection or exposure due to the high risk population served in these facilities. If staffing shortages jeopardize the safe provision of services or resident health and safety, facilities may implement a 5-day duration of furlough to the extent necessary.

### Nursing Homes

Nursing homes should continue to follow all relevant CMS and CDC guidance for isolation and quarantine of residents and work furlough of staff.

CDC is expected to issue updated guidance for certain congregate settings, which will be reviewed as it becomes available.