



2022 Health Advisory #1

New York City COVID-19 Isolation and Quarantine Updates

- New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) has issued updated guidance that shortens isolation and quarantine to 5 days for most people.
- Educate patients about the importance of taking enhanced precautions for 10 days following an exposure or from when isolation begins, including wearing a well-fitting mask whenever they are around others, as the risk of transmitting COVID-19 continues beyond day 5.
- In NYS, shortened isolation and quarantine do not apply to nursing homes and certain other congregate settings where there are people at high risk for severe COVID-19 or secondary transmission.
- Direct patients to self-attestation forms for paid leave during isolation or quarantine available on the NYS DOH website.
- See the New York City Health Department's [COVID-19 Guidance on Isolation, Quarantine and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) on the [COVID-19 Provider webpage](#) for more information.

January 26, 2022

Dear Colleagues,

New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH) released [Updated Isolation & Quarantine Guidance](#) on January 14, 2022 and [Interim Advisory on Return-to-Work Protocols for Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 in Healthcare Settings](#) on January 4, 2022. The updated requirements and guidance are largely consistent with updated [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) guidance](#) (see [CDC's rationale](#) for these changes). This alert summarizes NYS updated requirements and recommendations and how they apply in New York City (NYC). For more detail, see NYC's [COVID-19 Guidance on Isolation, Quarantine and Transmission-Based Precautions](#).

Isolation for People Diagnosed with COVID-19

NYS adopted CDC's recommendation that isolation can end after 5 days if the individual:

- Is asymptomatic or has improving symptoms and has been fever-free for the prior 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, **and**
- Can continue to wear a well-fitting mask for 10 days.

Day 1 is the day **after** symptom onset or, if asymptomatic, the day after the test date.

Some people still need to isolate for at least 10 days, including children under age 2, for whom masks are not recommended, and others unable to wear a mask consistently and correctly. People who are hospitalized for COVID-19 or are moderately to severely immunocompromised also may need to continue isolation for at least 10 days, as may people in nursing homes and certain other congregate settings (see below).

Testing is not required to end isolation. People who want a test should get an antigen test on day 5 of isolation. An antigen test is preferred since PCR and other nucleic acid amplification tests may continue to

give a positive result even after someone is no longer infectious. Those who test positive must continue isolation through day 10; repeat testing is not recommended. People **must wear a mask through day 10** and take other enhanced precautions (described below) because some people remain infectious after day 5.

Quarantine After Close Contact with Someone With COVID-19

A close contact is being less than 6 feet from a person with COVID-19 for a cumulative total of at least 15 minutes within a 24-hour period. This definition aligns with CDC and NYS and updates the definition previously used in NYC. Health care settings and schools may apply different definitions of close contact within their settings.

NYS does **not** require quarantine after close contact with someone with COVID-19 for people who:

- Are [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccination (i.e., completed a primary vaccine series at least two weeks earlier, and received additional doses and boosters if eligible), **or**
- Have had and recovered from confirmed COVID-19 (diagnosed with a viral test) within the past 90 days.

Because vaccine breakthrough and re-infection are possible, for 10 days following their last exposure, people exempt from quarantine should wear a well-fitting mask when around others (including at home), monitor for symptoms, and avoid spending time with people who are immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe COVID-19 and nursing homes and other high-risk settings. They should also get tested 5 days after exposure, or right away if symptoms develop (except that people who had confirmed COVID-19 in the past 90 days only need to get tested if they develop symptoms).

Everyone else (including people who are fully vaccinated and eligible for a booster but not boosted) must quarantine for at least 5 days, with day 1 being the day **after** the last day of exposure. They should get tested on day 5. If negative (or if unable to get tested), quarantine can end; if positive or symptoms develop, they must isolate. People should continue to monitor for symptoms, wear a well-fitting mask and take enhanced precautions (described below) through day 10 in case COVID-19 develops.

Enhanced Precautions During and After Isolation and Quarantine

Explain to patients the need for continued precautions for 10 days following an exposure or from when isolation begins given the continued risk of transmitting COVID-19. [Educate patients](#) about the [importance of wearing a well-fitting mask](#) when around others (including at home), and recommend that they wear a cloth mask over a disposable mask to improve protection and fit, or use a higher-grade mask or respirator, such as an N95, KN95 or KF94. Urge patients to avoid the following activities through day 10:

- Spending time with people who are immunocompromised, are ages 65 or older, or have a medical condition that increases their risk for severe COVID-19
- Visiting nursing homes and other high-risk settings
- Going to crowded places and places where a mask cannot always be worn
- Eating around others at home, at work, and at restaurants
- Travel and non-essential activities

Settings Where Shortened Isolation and Quarantine Do Not Apply

In NYS, shortened isolation and quarantine do not apply in correctional facilities, detention facilities, homeless shelters, adult care facilities, group homes, cruise ships, NYS Office for People with

Developmental Disabilities facilities, some NYS Office of Mental Health facilities (if masking, distancing, or other prevention measures cannot be followed) and other congregate settings with individuals at high risk for severe COVID-19 or transmission. These facilities should follow 10-day quarantine and isolation policies for residents and clients. Facility staff should follow their employer's guidance on exclusion from work.

Nursing homes should continue to follow Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), CDC, and NYS guidance for isolation and quarantine of residents and exclusion of staff from work.

Staff and Students in School and Childcare Settings

Schools and childcare facilities may have different requirements for when staff and children may return following a COVID-19 exposure. For example, many schools, including all NYC Department of Education K-12 schools, allow children to go to school during quarantine, if testing and other requirements are met. Suggest that parents or guardians check with their child's school or day care for specific requirements. People who are allowed to attend work or school while in quarantine should continue to quarantine while not at work or school.

Guidelines for Health Care Personnel

NYS' January 4, 2022 return-to-work guidelines for health care personnel are similar to CDC guidance. When staffing shortages are anticipated (referred to as contingency), NYS has adopted a 5-day exclusion for health care personnel who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic at day 5. Under contingency strategies, unlike CDC, NYS continues to require health care personnel who are not fully vaccinated to adhere to conventional work exclusion strategies (that is, they should be excluded from work for 10 days, or 7 days with a negative test). See [NYS guidelines](#) for more information.

Self-Attestation Forms for Paid Sick Leave during Isolation or Quarantine

NYS released self-attestation forms for paid sick leave:

- [Affirmation of Isolation Form](#)
- [Affirmation of Quarantine Form](#)

Quarantine and isolation orders also remain available through the NYC Health Department. People who need to quarantine or isolate for longer than 5 days and anyone who has questions or needs help filling out the form can call **212-COVID19** (212-268-4319) (press 6 at the prompt).

Sincerely,



Celia Quinn MD, MPH
Deputy Commissioner
Division of Disease Control

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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If you have any questions regarding the HAN website, call 1-888-NYCMED9 or write to nycmed@health.nyc.gov.