

# THIS IS AN OFFICIAL NH DHHS HEALTH ALERT

Distributed by the NH Health Alert Network  
[DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov)  
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## COVID-19 Pandemic, Update # 53 *Updated Isolation and Quarantine Guidance*

### Key Points and Recommendations:

- NH is adapting CDC's updated [Quarantine and Isolation](#) recommendations as outlined below:
  - This guidance applies to the general public, including businesses and K-12 schools. This guidance does NOT apply to healthcare organizations, correctional institutions, or homeless shelters.
  - See the Tables below for a summary of changes to the isolation and quarantine guidance.
  - Review CDC's rationale and FAQs for [why CDC shortened isolation and quarantine for the general population](#).
  - Isolation: Everyone, regardless of vaccination status or symptoms, should isolate for at least 5 days if they test positive for COVID-19 (or have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) while awaiting testing), and then wear a [well-fitting face mask](#) for an additional 5 days when around other people at home or in public locations.
    - If a person continues to have fever or other symptoms that are not improving after 5 days of isolation, that person should continue to isolate until they are fever free (off fever-reducing medications) and other symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours.
    - Testing is not required to come off isolation early, but testing around day 5 can be considered by individuals and implemented by organizations, if desired.
    - People who cannot or will not wear a face mask when in public locations should isolate for a full 10 days.
    - People who are severely ill with COVID-19 (e.g., hospitalized) or who are severely immunocompromised should isolate for a longer period of time – CDC recommends at least 10 days of isolation, possibly longer, depending on the person's situation.
  - Quarantine: According to the CDC, persons who are unvaccinated or who are not “up to date” on receiving all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses (including booster shots) should quarantine for at least 5 days and then wear a [well-fitting face mask](#) for an additional 5 days when around other people at home or in public locations after exposure to someone with COVID-19.
    - In contrast with CDC's guidance, NH DPHS recommends quarantine only for household contact exposures who are not within 90 days of testing positive for COVID-19.
    - “Household contact” (HHC) is defined as any person who lives or sleeps in the same indoor shared space as another person diagnosed with COVID-19 (either a temporary or permanent living arrangement) leading to exposure to a person with COVID-19.
    - HHCs who cannot or will not wear a face mask when in public locations should quarantine for 10 days.
    - Everyone with an exposure to COVID-19, whether a HHC or not, should seek COVID-19 viral testing around day 5 after an exposure, even if a person is asymptomatic. PCR-based tests continue to be the most accurate, but antigen tests are also appropriate if PCR testing is not available.

- Anyone who develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#) should isolate and get tested.

- Healthcare facilities (including long term care/skilled nursing facilities) should refer to CDC’s updated [Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure](#) and [Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages](#) for guidance on isolation and quarantine of healthcare workers with an occupational COVID-19 exposure. Decisions on exclusion and testing of healthcare workers exposed in home or community settings should be based on an individual risk assessment of the situation and healthcare facility workforce capacity.

**Tables: Summary of [Isolation](#) and [Quarantine](#) Guidance**

Persons who should isolate	Recommended Action
<p>Any person who tests positive for COVID-19 or who has <a href="#">symptoms of COVID-19</a> while awaiting testing – regardless of vaccination status, previous infection, or lack of symptoms.</p> <p>(Note: CDC recommends longer periods of isolation for people who are severely ill with COVID-19 and require hospitalization or intensive care unit support, or for people with severely compromised immune systems.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home and away from others (including people in your household) for at least 5 days.</li> <li>Isolation can end after day 5 if you are fever-free (off fever-reducing medications) for at least 24 hours and other symptoms are improving.</li> <li>If fever has been present in the prior 24 hours, or if other symptoms are not improving, then you should continue to isolate until fever free and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours, or until after 10 days of isolation.</li> <li>For 10 days:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a <a href="#">well-fitting</a> medical face mask when around other people.</li> <li>Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high-risk for severe disease.</li> <li>Avoid travel, if possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note: per CDC guidance, you can take an antigen test on day 5 before ending isolation and, if positive, you should continue to isolate for a total of 10 days. Individuals and businesses/organizations can consider but do not have to adopt this testing strategy.</p>

Persons who should quarantine after being exposed to someone with COVID-19	Recommended Action
<p>Household contacts who are either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unvaccinated; OR</li> <li>Not “up to date” on receiving all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses (including booster doses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home and away from others for 5 days after the last exposure.</li> <li>Watch for symptoms for COVID-19 for 10 days after the last exposure, and get tested if symptoms develop.</li> <li>Get tested at least 5 days after the exposure, even if no symptoms develop. If positive, move to isolation.</li> <li>For 10 days:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a <a href="#">well-fitting</a> medical face mask when around other people.</li> <li>Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high-risk for severe disease.</li> <li>Avoid travel, if possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Persons who do NOT need to quarantine after being exposed to someone with COVID-19	Recommended Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower risk exposures in the community setting (e.g., non-household contacts)</li> <li>• Household contacts who are “up to date” on receiving all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses</li> <li>• Unvaccinated household contacts who are within 90 days of testing positive for COVID-19 by antigen or PCR-based testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wear a well-fitting face mask around other people for 10 days, especially in indoor settings.</li> <li>• If symptoms develop, stay home and get tested for COVID-19.</li> <li>• Get tested for COVID-19 on day 5, even if you don’t have symptoms.</li> <li>• If testing is positive, follow isolation recommendations above.</li> </ul>

**Definitions:**

Isolation: For people who are sick or who have tested positive for the COVID-19 virus.

Quarantine: For people who have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus and are at risk for developing infection.

Household contact: Any person who lives or sleeps in the same indoor shared space as another person diagnosed with COVID-19 (either a temporary or permanent living arrangement) leading to exposure to the person with COVID-19.

“Up to date” on COVID-19 vaccination: A person is “up to date” on COVID-19 vaccination when they have completed a primary COVID-19 vaccine series (the single-dose J&J Janssen vaccine, or a 2-dose series of the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine) AND any booster shots which they are eligible for and recommended to receive. CDC has information about [staying up to date on COVID-19 vaccination](#) and who should get a booster shot.

Unvaccinated: Any person who has NOT completed a primary COVID-19 vaccine series.

- For any questions regarding this notification, please call the NH DHHS, DPHS, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control at (603) 271-4496 during business hours (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.).
- If you are calling after hours or on the weekend, please call the New Hampshire Hospital switchboard at (603) 271-5300 and request the Public Health Professional on-call.
- To change your contact information in the NH Health Alert Network, please send an email to [DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov](mailto:DHHS.Health.Alert@dhhs.nh.gov).

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