



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Quarantine and Isolation Guidance for the General Public

Updated: March 25, 2022

#### **What is the current isolation guidance?**

Anyone who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of their vaccination status should stay home and isolate for 5 days. After 5 days, you may leave your house if you have no symptoms or your symptoms are improving. You should wear a mask for an additional 5 days. If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

#### **What is the current quarantine guidance?**

- If you got a COVID-19 booster vaccine **or** completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months **or** completed the primary series of Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the last 2 months you do not need to quarantine but should wear a mask around others for 10 days and test on day 5 if possible. If you develop symptoms, stay home and get a test.
- If you have completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted **or** completed the primary series of Johnson & Johnson vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted **or** are not up to date on your vaccines, you should quarantine for at least 5 days. You should also get a test on day 5 and continue to wear a mask for 5 additional days. If you develop symptoms, stay home and get a test.

#### **How does the guidance apply to healthcare personnel at hospitals and skilled nursing facilities?**

Please refer to the table graphic located within [the COVID-19 Quarantine and Isolation Guidance by Population document](#) for guidance regarding healthcare personnel at hospitals and skilled nursing facilities.

#### **Why does the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) not suggest taking a test at the end of isolation?**

Most COVID-19 transmission occurs happens 1 to 2 days before you first experience symptoms and 2 to 3 days after you first experience symptoms. Getting tested early (e.g., when you first experience symptoms or learn of a close contact) can help you know when to isolate and can help prevent further infection. Some people may continue to get a positive test result after their infectious period is over and they are no longer likely to spread COVID-19. It is more useful to test early on, when you may be infectious.



### **Why should those ending isolation after 5 days only wear a standard face mask and not an N-95 mask?**

Most COVID-19 transmission occurs happens 1 to 2 days before you first experience symptoms and 2 to 3 days after you first experience symptoms. Wearing a well-fitting mask following isolation will decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19 to others. For guidance on masks, please visit [covid.ri.gov/masks](https://covid.ri.gov/masks). Respirators (e.g., N95s) are a useful option for personal protective equipment to protect people in specific settings, like hospitals.

### **Why are isolation recommendations the same for those who are unvaccinated, who have completed their primary series, and who have gotten a booster dose?**

COVID-19 vaccination decreases the risk of infection, serious illness, hospitalization, and death. Booster doses help increase the protection you get from COVID-19 vaccines. Based on the available data, anyone with a COVID-19 infection is infectious (or can spread the virus) for the same amount of time, regardless of vaccination status. Research on the Omicron variant tells us that people who are vaccinated but still get infected with Omicron (also known as “breakthrough cases”) are infectious for approximately the same amount of time as people who are unvaccinated.

### **Why are the recommendations for quarantine different for those who have completed their primary vaccination series and those got their booster doses?**

Data consistently show that people have the highest level of protection against COVID-19 when 1) they get booster doses of COVID-19 vaccine or 2) it has been 6 months or less since their primary vaccination series of Pfizer or Moderna **OR** 2 months or less since their Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Because the booster dose gives you increased protection against the Omicron variant, people who got a booster dose are less likely to become infected or to spread COVID-19 to others.

### **Following exposure (or during isolation and in the 5 days following), do I need to wear a mask in my home?**

CDC has always recommended that during periods of quarantine (and isolation) all members of the household should wear a well-fitted mask, even inside the home. If possible, one member of the household should care for the person who is in quarantine (or isolation) to limit potential exposures. This is especially important if there are people who are unvaccinated, who have completed their primary series but have not gotten a booster dose, or who have compromised immune systems inside the home. Following exposure (or during isolation and in the 5 days following), individuals should continue to wear a mask at home.