

Update: Updated Interim Guidance on Discontinuing Home Isolation/Quarantine and Returning to Work Criteria for Healthcare Providers

DATE:	3/19/2020
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Rachel Levine, MD, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Updated Interim Guidance on Discontinuing Home Isolation/Quarantine and Returning to Work Criteria for Healthcare Providers with COVID-19
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This transmission is a “Health Update”, provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is releasing the following updates based on guidance released by the DOH on March 17, 2020, for discontinuation of home isolation for persons with COVID-19.

- DOH is recommending that persons with COVID-19, including healthcare providers (HCP) under home isolation be released from isolation after a minimum of 7 days after symptom onset and after 72 hours of being afebrile and feeling well.
- People with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had ANY symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.
- HCP returning to work after being released from isolation must wear a facemask at all times and be restricted from caring for severely immunocompromised patients for 14 days after symptom onset, as well as adhere to strict hand and respiratory hygiene and monitor for symptoms.
- Household contacts of persons with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days after their last household exposure. For most, this will be 14 days after the person with COVID-19 is released from isolation.
- People who had close contact* with a symptomatic person with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days from the date of last contact with the person with COVID-19.
- If you have a patient under isolation and would like to consult with DOH, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

This guidance is based on available information about COVID-19 and subject to change as additional information becomes available.

These recommendations will prevent most but may not prevent all instances of secondary spread. The risk of transmission after recovery, is likely very substantially less than that during illness. If you have a patient under isolation and would like to consult with DOH, please call **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

1. For Persons with COVID-19 Under Home Isolation:

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND,

At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

For example, if day 0 is the onset of illness, persons with COVID-19 that are afebrile and have no respiratory symptoms as of day 3 must remain isolated until day 7. Someone with COVID-19 who still has a fever or respiratory symptoms until day 10 cannot be released until day 13.

Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had ANY symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.

2. For Healthcare Providers (HCP) Diagnosed with COVID-19:

HCP MUST be excluded from work until:

At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND,

At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

After returning to work, HCP should:

- Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- Be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette in CDC's interim infection control guidance (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
- Self-monitor for symptoms, and seek re-evaluation from occupational health/primary care provider and do not work if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.

3. For Household Contacts of Persons with COVID-19

Because exposure is considered to be ongoing within the house, household contacts of persons with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days after the case has been released from isolation. This means that household contacts will need to remain at home longer than the initial case.

4. For Non-Household Contacts of Persons with COVID-19

People who had close contact* with a person with COVID-19 must be quarantined for 14 days from the date of last contact with the person with COVID-19.

If someone had close contact* with a COVID-19 case **prior** to the case becoming symptomatic, there was no exposure and no quarantine is necessary.

* Close contact is defined as:

a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– OR –

b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of March 19, 2020 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.
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