



## REVISED ISOLATION/QUARANTINE GUIDANCE FOR K-12 SCHOOLS AND CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

January 16, 2022

In response to the recent changes in COVID-19 isolation and quarantine recommendations for the general public put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services is providing the following interim guidance for local school systems, nonpublic schools, and childcare programs.

### Persons Who Have Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 (Isolation)

For a full 10 days, all persons should:

- Wear a well-fitting mask when around others\*\*
- Avoid being around people who are at high risk<sup>1</sup>
- Avoid travel

Additionally:

1. All persons 5 and older who test<sup>2</sup> positive for COVID-19 or have suspected COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

These persons should complete isolation as follows:

- Stay home for at least 5 full days from the date of symptom onset if symptomatic<sup>3</sup> or the date of the positive test if no symptoms.
  - Day 1 is considered the first full day after symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the first full day after the person tested positive if asymptomatic.
- After Day 5, if the person has no symptoms or if symptoms are improved and they have had no fever for at least 24 hours without medication, they may return to school or childcare PROVIDED they wear a well-fitting mask when around others\*\* for an additional 5 days.
- **If the person is unable to wear a mask around others, they should remain at home for a full 10 days. For example, for students who are returning either from isolation (after a positive COVID-19 test) or quarantine (after exposure), the recommendation is that masks may be removed only when eating and during naptime. Unmasked time should be minimized and physical distancing and ventilation maximized during these times. People should not be participating in any other activities unmasked.**

<p><b>2. All children under 5 years old who test<sup>2</sup> positive for COVID-19 or have suspected COVID-19.</b></p>	<p><b>These children <u>should complete isolation</u> as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay home for at least 10 full days from the date of symptom onset if symptomatic<sup>3</sup> or the date of the positive test if no symptoms.</li> </ul> <p>Day 1 is considered the first full day after symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the first full day after the person tested positive if asymptomatic.</p>
<p><b>3. All persons who have COVID-19 symptoms and:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Test negative for COVID-19 following the onset of symptoms, or</b></li> <li><b>Have not been tested or received a result for COVID-19.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>These persons <u>should isolate at home</u> until their symptoms improve</b> and they have had no fever for at least 24 hours without medication.</p> <p>For persistent symptoms, recommend consultation with a health care provider for consideration of repeat testing or alternative diagnosis.</p> <p>If symptomatic and negative test is a rapid antigen test, a confirmatory test with a PCR test is recommended.</p>

<b>Persons Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 (Quarantine)</b>	
<p>For a full 10 days, <u>all</u> persons should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a well-fitting mask when around others**</li> <li>Avoid being around people who are at high risk<sup>1</sup></li> <li>Avoid travel</li> </ul> <p><b>Additionally:</b></p>	
<p>1. The following recommendations apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Adults 18 years and older who have been boosted OR completed the primary series</b> of Pfizer within the last 5 months or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months OR completed the primary series of J&amp;J vaccine within the last 2 months AND they have no symptoms;</li> <li><b>Children 5-17 years old</b> who have completed the Pfizer vaccine series as recommended AND they have no symptoms; and</li> <li><b>Persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days</b> (i.e. tested positive using a viral test) AND have no symptoms</li> </ul>	<p><b>These persons <u>do not need to quarantine</u> after exposure <u>but should:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wear a well-fitting mask around others** for 10 days after the last close contact<sup>4</sup> with the person with COVID-19 (Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact)</li> <li>Get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact (persons who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days do not need to test).</li> <li>If the person tests positive or develops symptoms they should stay home and follow recommendations for isolation above.</li> <li>If the person tests negative or is unable to get a test, they should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others** for 10 days after the last close contact.</li> </ul>

<p>2. The following recommendations apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Persons 5 and older who have not completed a primary set of vaccinations;</b> and</li> <li>• <b>Adults 18 years and older</b> who have completed the primary series of Pfizer vaccine over 5 months ago or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and <b>are not boosted</b> OR completed the primary series of J&amp;J over 2 months ago and are not boosted.</li> </ul>	<p><b>These persons <u>should quarantine</u> after exposure as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home for at least 5 days after the last close contact<sup>4</sup> with the person with COVID-19 (Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact)</li> <li>• If no symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact<sup>4</sup>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the person tests negative, they may return to school or childcare PROVIDED they wear a well-fitting mask when around others** until 10 days after their last close contact;</li> <li>○ If the person tests positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above;</li> <li>○ If the person is unable to get a test, they may return to school or childcare after Day 5 IF they wear a well-fitting mask when around others** until 10 days after their last close contact.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the person develops symptoms they should get tested immediately and remain at home; if the test is positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above.</li> <li>• If the person is unable to mask around others, they should remain at home for 10 days from the date of last close contact.</li> </ul>
<p>3. The following recommendations apply to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Children younger than 5 years old.</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>These children <u>should quarantine</u> after exposure as follows:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home for 10 days after the last close contact<sup>4</sup> with the person with COVID-19 (Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact)</li> <li>• If no symptoms, get tested at least 5 days after the last close contact. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the child tests negative, they may return to school or childcare PROVIDED they wear a well-fitting mask when around others** until 10 days after their last close contact;</li> <li>○ If the child tests positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• If the person develops symptoms they should get tested immediately and remain at home; if the test is positive, they should follow the recommendations for isolation above.</li> <li>• If the child is unable to mask around others, they should remain at home for 10 days from the date of last close contact.</li> </ul>

## NOTES

\* **Corrected** to include a negative test to return to childcare for children under 5 years old.

\*\***Mask requirements** for people who are returning either from isolation (after a positive COVID-19 test) or quarantine (after exposure): the recommendation is that masks may be removed only when eating and during naptime. Unmasked time should be minimized and physical distancing and ventilation maximized during these times. People should not be participating in any other activities unmasked. Teachers and students are strongly encouraged to wear size-appropriate (child or adult size) tight-fitting masks, such as KN95 masks.

<sup>1</sup> Persons at **high risk** for COVID-19 include those 65 and older and people of any age with certain medical conditions. Please see the CDC's [full list of high-risk medical conditions](#).

<sup>2</sup> **Diagnostic tests** for COVID-19 include molecular (RT-PCR, sometimes just called PCR) and viral antigen tests, but not antibody tests. More information on different types of diagnostic tests can be found on the [CDC website](#). [Self-testing](#), using over-the-counter or home rapid tests, if positive, may be used as an indication of current infection. If a rapid home test is used, it should be used as directed, including a repeat test, and may need to be confirmed with a molecular (PCR) test.

<sup>3</sup> [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) include fever or chills, cough (either new or different than usual), shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, the new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

<sup>4</sup> A **close contact** of someone with COVID-19 (or suspected of having COVID-19) includes, but is not necessarily limited to, being within 6 feet of infected persons for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). For more information on close contact, see the revised [CDC guidance on close contact](#).

Schools and childcare programs may still use the MDH modified quarantine options in the K-12 School and Child Care COVID-19 Guidance dated October 27, 2021, if they meet all of the requirements that are outlined. For example, Test-to-Stay, Weekly Testing, and Consistent and Constant Mask Wearing.