



**COVID-19 ISOLATION / QUARANTINE GUIDANCE**  
**January 25, 2022**

This guidance applies to K-12 schools and childcare, as well as the general population and supersedes any prior guidance. This guidance does not supersede any directions or orders issued by Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The following populations should continue to follow setting and profession specific recommendations as well as other applicable state and federal orders and regulations:

- Healthcare settings, including health care personnel, residents or patients residing in healthcare facilities,
- [Long-term care](#) and other specific [congregate living](#) settings (including nursing homes, group homes, assisted living facilities, and congregate shelters),
- [Staff and residents of correctional and detention facilities](#), and
- Where an employee’s absence would cause operational deficiencies in key services (e.g., fire, police, sheriffs, and corrections).

<b>Persons Who Tested Positive for COVID-19 or Have Symptoms, Regardless of Vaccination Status (Isolation)</b>	
<p><b>1. Persons 5 and older</b></p> <p>* Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms started in symptomatic persons or the first full day after the person tested positive if asymptomatic.</p>	<p>Day 1-5*: Stay home, isolate, wear a well-fitting mask around others in your home.</p> <p>Day 6-10: You may leave your home if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have no symptoms, or if your symptoms have improved, <u>and</u></li> <li>• you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medication.</li> </ul> <p>You must continue to stay home if you have symptoms that are not improving.</p> <p>Day 11: You may end isolation if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have no symptoms, or if your symptoms have improved, <u>and</u></li> <li>• you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medication.</li> </ul> <p>You must continue to stay home and isolate if you still have symptoms that are not improving and should consult with a health care provider before ending isolation.</p> <p>All days: During Isolation, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask if you must be around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul>

<p><b>2. Persons under 5 years old</b></p>	<p>Day 1-10: Stay home, isolate, wear a well-fitting mask around others.</p> <p>Day 11: You may end isolation if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have no symptoms, or if your symptoms have improved, <u>and</u></li> <li>• you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.</li> </ul> <p>You must continue to stay home and isolate if you still have symptoms that are not improving and should consult with a health care provider before ending isolation.</p> <p>All days: During Isolation, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask if you must be around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Persons with symptoms (presumed positive) who have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tested negative,</li> <li>• Are awaiting test results, or</li> <li>• Unable to test due to test supply or unavailability.</li> </ul>	<p>All days: Stay home until:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• your symptoms have improved, <u>and</u> you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication, or</li> <li>• you have a negative PCR test result.</li> </ul> <p>During Isolation, you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask if you must be around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul> <p>For persistent symptoms, you should consult with a health care provider.</p>

**Persons Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19 and Have No Symptoms (Quarantine)**

<p><b>1. Persons 5 and older who are not fully vaccinated or are not boosted, despite being eligible</b></p> <p>** Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact.</p>	<p>Day 1-5**:</p> <p>Stay home.</p> <p>Day 5-10:</p> <p>Get tested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your result is negative, or you cannot get a test, you may leave your home on or after day 6 but should still wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others.</li> <li>• If you are unable to mask around others, you should remain at home.</li> <li>• If your result is positive, stay home and follow recommendations for isolation.</li> </ul> <p>Day 11:</p> <p>You may end quarantine.</p>
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	<p>All Days: During quarantine you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul> <p>If you develop symptoms, you should get tested. If positive stay home and follow recommendations for isolation.</p>
<p><b>2. Persons under 5 years old</b></p>	<p>Day 1-10: Stay home.</p> <p>Day 5-10: Get tested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your result is negative, you may leave home and return to childcare on or after day 6 but should still wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others.</li> <li>• If you are unable to mask around others, you should remain at home.</li> <li>• If your result is positive, stay home and follow recommendations for isolation.</li> </ul> <p>If you can't test.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay home. You may return to childcare on day 11.</li> </ul> <p>Day 11: You may end quarantine.</p> <p>All Days: During quarantine you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul> <p>If you develop symptoms, get tested. If positive stay home and follow recommendations for isolation.</p>

**Persons Who Are Exposed to Someone with COVID-19, But Are Fully Vaccinated/Boosted and Have No Symptoms**

<p><b>1. Persons 5 and older who are fully vaccinated and/or boosted</b></p> <p>** Day 1 is considered the first full day after the date of last close contact.</p>	<p>YOU DO NOT NEED TO QUARANTINE, BUT:</p> <p>For 10 days**: You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul> <p>If you develop symptoms, you should get tested, stay home and follow recommendations for isolation.</p>
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<p><b>2. Persons who tested positive within the last 90 days</b></p>	<p>YOU DO NOT NEED TO QUARANTINE, BUT:</p> <p>For 10 days: You should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wear a well-fitting mask whenever you are around others,</li> <li>• avoid being around people who are high risk, and</li> <li>• avoid travel.</li> </ul> <p>If you develop new symptoms after you recovered from the last time you tested positive, stay home, and follow recommendations for isolation.</p>
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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Do I need to wear a mask during isolation or quarantine?**

During periods of isolation or quarantine, unmasked time should be minimized, and physical distancing and ventilation should be maximized whenever you are around others. You should avoid participating in any unmasked activities with others (including eating and drinking). It is strongly encouraged that everyone wears size appropriate (child or adult size) well-fitting masks, such as KN95 masks.

### **What does “fully vaccinated and boosted” mean?**

- Persons 5-11 years old who have completed the primary series of Pfizer,
- Persons 12 years and older who have completed the primary series of vaccinations and have been boosted,
- Persons 12 years and older who have completed the primary series of Pfizer within the last 5 months,
- Persons 18 years and older who completed the primary series of Moderna within the last 5 months, or
- Persons 18 years and older who completed the primary series of J&J within the last 2 months.

### **What does “high risk” mean?**

Individuals who are more susceptible to complications from COVID. Individuals 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](#).

### **What type of COVID-19 tests should I take?**

There are two diagnostic tests for COVID-19 include molecular (RT-PCR, sometimes just called PCR) and viral antigen tests. Antibody tests are not recommended to identify a current COVID-19 infection. 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, maybe used as 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.

### **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

[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, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea.

**What is a close contact?**

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](#).

**Can I “test-out” of isolation?**

No. DHHS follows the CDC’s current guidance, which is based on a time and symptom-based return from a COVID-19 infection.

**Why can’t my 3-year-old leave isolation and return to childcare after day 5?**

Because some individuals are still infectious more than 5 days after initial infection, early release from isolation relies upon the consistent use of masks and social distancing around others until day 10 and is safer in settings where there are high vaccination rates. Children under 5 are developmentally less able to consistently wear masks around others or socially distance during unmasked activities (such as during naps and mealtimes) and are not yet eligible for vaccination. Given the increased risk for spread in these settings, it is our guidance that children under 5 who are recovering from COVID-19 remain in isolation for the full 10 days.