



## Return to Work Recommendations for Non-Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19

**Who this is for:** Employers, employees and public health officials making decisions about non-healthcare personnel returning to work who have been diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19, or who have a suspected case of COVID-19 (e.g., developed cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fever), but did not get tested or who are awaiting test results.

### *Symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after:*

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since recovery, which is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath and others)

### *Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after:*

- At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person remains asymptomatic.
- Asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons listed above.

### *Symptomatic persons with suspected COVID-19 who did NOT get tested can return to work after:*

- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; **and**
- At least 24 hours have passed since recovery, which is defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath and others)

### *Asymptomatic persons with known exposure\* to a person with COVID-19 can return to work after:*

- Ideally, quarantining for a full 14 days since exposure to the COVID-19 positive person is the best option to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to recommend a 14 day quarantine but has allowed two options to shorten this quarantine duration as outlined below.

- ***A person who has NO SYMPTOMS***, can end their quarantine after 10 days without any further testing. They need to continue to self-monitor through Day 14, following **correct and strict mask usage**, social distancing and all other hygiene measures.
- ***A person who has NO SYMPTOMS***, can end their quarantine after Day 7, if they test negative on Day 5 or later with a PCR test, or test negative with an antigen test on Day 7. They need to continue to self-monitor through Day 14, following correct and strict mask usage, social distancing and all other hygiene measures.
- ***A person cannot end their quarantine earlier than Day 7, even if they have no symptoms.***
- After release from quarantine, individuals must continue to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 illness through Day 14, and adhere to all recommended interventions, including: **correct and consistent mask use**, social distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds, ensuring adequate indoor ventilation. If any symptoms develop, immediately self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status and to assess for testing.

**Fully vaccinated persons exposed to someone with confirmed COVID-19 do not need to quarantine, if they meet all of these conditions:**

- They are fully vaccinated and at least 2 weeks since the final vaccine dose
- AND do not have COVID-19 symptoms since their exposure to a person who tested positive for COVID-19.
- Fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

Fully vaccinated people should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If the fully vaccinated close contact is a caregiver or a household member for someone with confirmed COVID-19, the close contact should still follow all of the precautions outlined for household members including: staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if possible, mask wearing, maintaining physical distancing, and following disinfecting and proper hygiene guidelines. You can find “Detailed Instructions if You Live with Someone Who Has Tested Positive for COVID-19” along with other guidance for close contacts at [covid.riverstonehealth.org](https://www.covid.riverstonehealth.org)

The above quarantine guidance for vaccinated people does not apply to long-term care facilities, but it does apply to healthcare workers outside of long-term care facilities.

**\*Definition of Exposure\*** An employee can be exposed to COVID-19 when he/she has been in direct contact with the secretions (droplets) of someone who has COVID-19 (being coughed or sneezed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.). Close contact means that he/she has been within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for 15 minutes in a 24 hour period and that close contact was with the COVID-19 positive person who had symptoms or had tested positive, or 2 days before then.

**August 13, 2021**

## Quarantine

The Quarantine date starts from the last known exposure to someone who has COVID-19. The period restarts if the employee has further close contact with a person while he/she is sick (e.g., co-worker, neighbor, or friend). The last day of quarantine is calculated from the date he/she had close contact with the person who has COVID-19.

Close contacts who are fully vaccinated do not have to quarantine if they meet all of these conditions:

- They are fully vaccinated and at least 2 weeks since the final vaccine dose
- AND are within 3 months of receiving their final dose
- AND do not have COVID-19 symptoms since their exposure to a person who tested positive for COVID-19.

Fully vaccinated people should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following an exposure. If the fully vaccinated close contact is your caregiver or a household member, the close contact should still follow all of the precautions outlined for household members including: staying in a separate room and using a separate bathroom if possible, mask wearing, maintaining physical distancing, and following disinfecting and proper hygiene guidelines. You can find “Detailed Instructions if You Live with Someone Who Has Tested Positive for COVID-19” along with other guidance for close contacts at [covid.riverstonehealth.org](https://covid.riverstonehealth.org)

The above quarantine guidance for vaccinated people does not apply to long-term care facilities, but it does apply to healthcare workers outside of long-term care facilities.

For individuals who are not fully vaccinated, the CDC continues to recommend a 14 day quarantine to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but has allowed two options to shorten this quarantine. Quarantine for close contacts can end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. Quarantine for close contacts can end after Day 7 if the person tests negative with a PCR test after Day 5, or with an antigen test on Day 7, and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than Day 7. After release from quarantine, individuals must continue to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 illness through Day 14, and follow all recommended interventions including correct and consistent mask use, social distancing and hygiene guidance.

If the employee lives with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom **and** the employee has had no close contact with the person since they isolated, the employee’s last day of quarantine is recommended by the CDC to be 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation, with the two options to reduce quarantine mentioned above.

If the employee continues to have close contact with a person who is ill, the employee will have to restart the quarantine from the last day he/she had close contact with anyone in the house who has COVID-19.

If the employee lives in a household where he/she cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19, the employee should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for up to 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria [to end home isolation, which means](#): At least 24 hours have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath and others); **and** at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

For more information on quarantine recommendations <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

**When returning to work, employees should:**

Wear a face covering if physical distancing cannot be maintained in the workplace, per current CDC guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

- Cloth face coverings are appropriate for persons who are not healthcare personnel and are recommended by CDC to help prevent asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 in settings where physical distancing cannot be practiced.
- 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 a healthcare provider if respiratory symptoms recur or worsen.



# Fact Sheet: When Can I Return to Work After COVID-19?

It depends on whether you tested positive, have symptoms, are suspected of having COVID-19, are fully vaccinated, or are a close contact of someone who tested positive. **This guidance is for non-healthcare personnel.**

## Tested Positive & Symptoms

Employees with positive COVID-19 test and symptoms

Wait at least 10 days after the symptoms first appeared **AND** wait 24 hours after fever ends and other symptoms have improved

## Tested Positive No Symptoms

Employees with no symptoms but tested positive for COVID-19

Wait at least 10 days after positive COVID-19 test, if the person remains symptom-free.

If symptoms develop after a positive test, employees can return to work after **at least 10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared. **AND** at least 24 hours after fever ends and other symptoms have improved.

## Suspected Symptoms

Employees suspected of having COVID-19 because of symptoms, but who did NOT get tested for COVID-19

Wait until **at least 10 days** have passed since symptoms first appeared **AND** wait 24 hours after fever ends and symptoms have improved.

## Close Contact

**Fully vaccinated employees** exposed to someone with COVID-19 **do not** have to quarantine **IF:**

- It has been at least 2 weeks since final vaccine dose.
- **And** they do not have COVID-19 symptoms since their exposure.
- **Employees should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, wear a mask indoors for 14 days after exposure, or until a negative test.**

**Employees who are not fully vaccinated**, with no symptoms, but a known exposure to a positive COVID-19 person should ideally, quarantine for 14-days after last exposure to the infected person. But employees with **no symptoms** may quarantine for 10 days without further testing; or for 7 days if they have a negative COVID-19 PCR test on Day 5 or later; or a negative antigen test on Day 7. They must self-monitor through Day 14 & follow **correct & strict mask usage**, social distancing & all hygiene measures.

