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Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for the General Public

Isolation and quarantine are important steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

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Massachusetts is expecting a snow event tonight through tomorrow. Please call your testing location to ensure it will be open, as closures are expected. If you need to test tomorrow (Friday, January 7th), consider an at-home Rapid Antigen test. | *Jan. 6, 2022, 11:44 am*

PLEASE NOTE: All non-health care *congregate care settings/residential programs and shelters should adhere to the Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for the General Public. This recently updated guidance includes:* group homes, residential treatment programs, community-based acute residential treatment programs, and clinical stabilization service programs funded, operated, licensed, and/or regulated by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Youth Services (DYS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS), the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). **Additionally, this guidance applies to** emergency shelter programs, including individual and family homeless shelters, domestic violence and sexual assault shelters, Veterans' shelters, including those funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development, and approved private special education schools which offer residential services and are approved by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Updated guidance reflecting the above is forthcoming.

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About COVID-19 isolation and quarantine

On December 28, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shortened the recommended time for isolation for individuals with COVID-19.

If the individual shows no symptoms, the recommended isolation period is shortened from 10 days to 5 days, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others.

For individuals unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second Pfizer or Moderna dose (or more than 2 months after the J&J vaccine) and not yet boosted who have been [exposed to COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#closecontact) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html#closecontact>), the CDC now recommends quarantine for 5 days followed by strict mask use for an additional 5 days.

Alternatively, if a 5-day quarantine is not feasible, it is imperative that an exposed person [wear a well-fitting mask](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/effective-masks.html>) at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure. Individuals who have received their booster do not need to quarantine following an exposure, but should wear a mask for 10 days after the exposure.

For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day 5 after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities.

Note: The updated *isolation* guidance applies to K-12 schools. At this time, *quarantine* guidance for K-12 schools remains unchanged. DESE's current mask requirement and [Policy on Vaccination Rate Threshold](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0927vax-rate-guidance.pdf) (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/2021-0927vax-rate-guidance.pdf>) remains in effect.

Child care programs should continue to partner with their local boards of health for support in developing or adjusting their individual program's quarantine and isolation policies in accordance with the revised CDC guidance. EEC will release additional child care specific COVID-19 information during the week of January 3rd. As a reminder, child care programs are encouraged to leverage these [suggested strategies](/service-details/eecs-health-and-safety-guidance-during-covid-19-recovery-for-child-care-providers) (</service-details/eecs-health-and-safety-guidance-during-covid-19-recovery-for-child-care-providers>), developed by EEC, when developing their policies for COVID-19 mitigation.

If you test positive for COVID-19 (isolate)

Everyone, regardless of

- Stay home for 5 days.

vaccination status:

- If you have no symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.

If you have a fever, continue to stay home until your fever resolves.

If you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 (quarantine)

If you:

Have been boosted

OR

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the last 6 months

OR

Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.

If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home.

If you:

Completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted

OR

Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted

OR

Are unvaccinated

- Stay home for 5 days. After that continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If you can't quarantine you must wear a mask for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.

If you develop symptoms get a test and stay home

Isolation and quarantine guidance for health care personnel

On December 29, 2021 DPH released new [Isolation and Quarantine Guidance for Health Care Personnel \(/doc/isolation-and-quarantine-guidance-for-health-care-personnel/download\)](#). Effective immediately, fully vaccinated, asymptomatic health care providers and health care personnel may return to work 5 days following a positive COVID test.

Additional Resources

[COVID-19 prevention and treatment \(/info-details/covid-19-prevention-and-treatment\)](#)

[Multi-language access to isolation and quarantine tips \(/info-details/covid-19-printable-fact-sheets\)](#)

[COVID-19 testing information \(/covid-19-testing\)](#)

[COVID-19 vaccine information \(/info-details/covid-19-vaccination-locations\)](#)

[Where to find COVID-19 related assistance \(/lists/covid-19-services-on-massgov\)](#)

LAST UPDATED:

December 29, 2021