



Department of Public Health

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ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDELINES FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION

El Paso, Texas

(UPDATED 01/06/2022)

This Guidance supersedes the “Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines for Individuals” issued August 3, 2021.

The following are the City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) has updated its recommendations for Isolation and Quarantine in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for all individuals, except Healthcare Workers. This guidance applies to the general population, including workplaces and K-12 schools; it does not apply to healthcare settings, correctional institutions, or homeless shelters. The City of Department of Public Health and the CDC provide separate guidance for these settings.

ISOLATION

Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19. Regardless of vaccination status, people who are in isolation should stay home until it’s safe for them to be around others.

Isolation for people who have COVID-19 and showing symptoms

At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, or wear a well-fitting mask when they need to be around others. People in isolation should stay in a specific “sick room” or area and use a separate bathroom, if available.

Everyone who has presumed or confirmed COVID-19 should stay home and isolate from other people for at least **5 full days** (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the day of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). They should wear a mask when around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days.

People who are confirmed to have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status. This includes:

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- People who have a positive viral test for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have symptoms.
- People with symptoms of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

Ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms

- If an individual had COVID-19 and had symptoms, he/she must isolate for at least 5 days. To calculate the 5-day isolation period, day 0 is the first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after symptoms developed. Individuals can leave isolation after 5 full days.
- Individuals can end isolation after 5 full days if they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved (Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).
- Individuals should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of their 5-day isolation period. If unable to wear a mask when around others, individuals should continue to isolate for a full 10 days.
- Avoid people who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease, and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If a person continues to have fever or their other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, they should wait to end their isolation until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and their other symptoms have improved. They must continue to wear a well-fitting mask; and contact their healthcare provider if they have questions.
- Do not travel during the 5-day isolation period. After ending isolation, avoid travel until a full 10 days after the first day of symptoms. If an individual must travel on days 6-10, wear a well-fitting mask when around others for the entire duration of travel. If unable to wear a mask, the individual should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until a full 10 days after your first day of symptoms.
- If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an antigen test (*) towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. Collect

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the test sample only if fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If the test result is positive, the individual should continue to isolate until day 10. If test result is negative, the individual can end isolation, but continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.

** As noted in the labeling for authorized over-the counter antigen tests: Negative results should be treated as presumptive. Negative results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions. To improve results, antigen tests should be used twice over a three-day period with at least 24 hours and no more than 48 hours between tests.*

Note that these recommendations on ending isolation do not apply to people with severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). See section below for recommendations for when to end isolation for these groups.

Ending isolation for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised)

- People who are severely ill with COVID-19 (including those who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support) and people with compromised immune systems might need to isolate at home longer. They may also require testing with a viral test to determine when they can be around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 and for people with weakened immune systems. We recommend people consult with their healthcare provider about when to resume being around other people.
- People who are immunocompromised should talk to their healthcare provider about the potential for reduced immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines and the need to continue to follow current prevention measures (including wearing a well-fitting mask, staying 6 feet apart from others they don't live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) to protect themselves against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.

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- Close contacts of immunocompromised people – including household members – are strongly encouraged to receive all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses to help protect these people.

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Ending isolation for people who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you test positive for COVID-19 and never develop [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of your positive viral test (based on the date you were tested) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- If you continue to have no symptoms, you can end isolation after at least 5 days.
- You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If you develop [symptoms](#) after testing positive, your 5-day isolation period should start over. Day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Follow the recommendations above for [ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms](#).
- Do not travel during your 5-day isolation period. After you end isolation, avoid travel until 10 days after the day of your positive test. If you must travel on days 6-10, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days after your positive test.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until 10 days after the day of your positive test.

If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#)¹ towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. If your test result is positive, you should continue to isolate until day 10. If your test result is negative, you can end isolation, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel described above.

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¹As noted in the [labeling for authorized over-the counter antigen tests external icon](#): *Negative results should be treated as presumptive. Negative results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions. To improve results, antigen tests should be used twice over a three-day period with at least 24 hours and no more than 48 hours between tests.*

Isolation in high-risk congregate settings

In certain high-risk congregate settings that have high risk of secondary transmission and where it is not feasible to cohort people (such as correctional and detention facilities, and homeless shelters), CDC recommends a 10-day isolation period for residents. During periods of critical staffing shortages, facilities may consider shortening the isolation period for staff to ensure continuity of operations. Decisions to shorten isolation may be made in consultation with the Department of Public Health to take into consideration the context and characteristics of the facility. CDC's setting-specific guidance may be consulted to provide additional recommendations for these settings.

QUARANTINE

The purpose of quarantine is to physically separate an individual exposed to COVID-19 from others that are currently healthy, thereby avoiding further spread of the virus among susceptible individuals.

Who does not need to quarantine:

People who came into close contact with someone with COVID-19 and are in one of the following groups, do not need to quarantine.

- Those of ages 18 or older and have received all recommended vaccine doses, including boosters and additional primary shots for some immunocompromised people.
- Those of ages 5-17 years who completed the primary series of COVID-19 vaccines.
- Those who had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (tested positive using a viral test).

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All of the above groups should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).

CITY COUNCIL

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Peter Svarzbein

Get tested at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19. If test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the Isolation section below.

District 2

Alexsandra Annello

If tested positive for COVID-19 with a viral test within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered and remain without COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine or get tested after close contact.

District 3

Cassandra Hernandez

District 4

Joe Molinar

Should wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).

District 5

Isabel Salcido

After quarantine

- Watch for symptoms until 10 days after last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If there are symptoms, isolate immediately and get tested.

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Quarantine in high-risk congregate settings

In certain congregate settings that have high risk of secondary transmission (such as correctional and detention facilities, and homeless shelters), CDC recommends a 10-day quarantine for residents, regardless of vaccination and booster status. During periods of critical staffing shortages, facilities may consider shortening the quarantine period for staff to ensure continuity of operations. Decisions to shorten quarantine in these settings made be made in consultation with the Department of Public Health. The CDC's setting-specific guidance may also be consulted for additional recommendations for these settings.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation-background.html>

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