



# Department of Public Health

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## ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS

### El Paso, Texas

**(UPDATED 04/27/2021)**

This Guidance supersedes the “Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines for Individuals” issued January 18, 2021.

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), in alignment with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for isolation and quarantine, is updating the Isolation and Quarantine guidelines for the City and County of El Paso, Texas. The DPH has adopted and is recommending the symptom-based method for those symptomatic individuals during their infection or the time-based method for those individuals who tested positive without symptoms. **The test-based method is no longer recommended.**

### ISOLATION

**Symptom-based method (no severe illness or severe immunocompromise)**

**Maintain isolation until:**

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* ; **AND**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed WITHOUT fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Improvement in symptoms.

**Symptom-based method (severe illness or severe immunocompromise)**

**Maintain isolation until:**

- At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; **AND**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed WITHOUT fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Improvement in symptoms.

**Time-based method (tested positive without symptoms)**

**Maintain isolation until:**

**Angela Mora – Health Director**

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O: (915) 212-6502 | <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/public-health/>





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- At least 10 days have passed since the date of their most recent positive COVID-19 diagnostic test; **AND**
- Continue without having any symptoms (assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.)
- If a case has a **severe immunocompromising condition** without symptoms, at least **20 days** should have passed *since the date of first positive specimen collected*.

NOTE: If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based strategy should be used based on the date of symptom onset.

## 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.

Quarantine can end **AFTER Day 10** of initial exposure with or without testing only if the following criteria are also met:

- **NO** symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection, have been reported during daily monitoring for the duration of the quarantine period up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued (10 days).
- Daily symptom monitoring continues through quarantine Day 14; and,
- Persons are counseled regarding the need to strictly adhere to all recommended preventative measures.

If a quarantined individual develops symptoms and is diagnosed with COVID-19, other individuals in the same household will require evaluation as contacts and will follow the established symptom-based or time-based strategy to release from isolation.

Testing for the purpose of evaluation for infection on exposed or symptomatic individuals must be prioritized. Persons can opt to continue quarantine for 14 days without testing per previous recommendations. This option maximally reduces risk of transmission of the virus.

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The risk of secondary transmission is elevated when housing is shared, such is the case of congregate settings (i.e. family households, prisons, students, or military recruits), and every effort should be made to physically separate the quarantined individual from others. If possible, quarantined individuals should reside alone in a separate closed room or closed area and have exclusive use of their own bathroom.

In the event that separation of quarantined individuals is not feasible, those individuals who are quarantined together should take steps to prevent spread of infection within the household. Mitigating strategies to prevent the spread of infection include correct and consistent use of masks or face coverings, appropriate distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning, and disinfection, ensuring adequate ventilation, and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness.

### EXCEPTIONS TO QUARANTINE AFTER EXPOSURE:

- Individuals who previously have been infected with COVID-19 are not required to quarantine and should monitor for symptoms for the following 14 days after high-risk exposure.
- Fully Vaccinated Individuals are not required to quarantine after exposure if they remain asymptomatic and should monitor for symptoms for the following 14 days.

Fully Vaccinated Individuals are those who, at the time of exposure,  $\geq 2$  weeks have past following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  weeks have passed following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

For those individuals that are exempt from quarantine, whether because they are fully vaccinated or have been previously infected, if symptoms develop within 14 days of the exposure, it is recommended to get tested with an approved COVID-19 molecular assay and remain in isolation if an alternative etiology cannot be readily identified by a healthcare provider.

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