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## **Ohio Department of Health Aligns with Updated CDC Quarantine and Isolation Guidance**

COLUMBUS – Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, director of the Ohio Department of Health, today announced that the Ohio Department of Health has aligned with CDC’s recently updated quarantine and isolation guidance released earlier this week.

“Evidence shows that the majority of COVID-19 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to symptom onset, and in the 2-3 days after symptoms begin,” explained Dr. Vanderhoff. “The CDC’s updated quarantine and isolation guidance takes the latest science and evidence into consideration, with a focus on testing, masking, and symptom monitoring – similar to Ohio’s reduced quarantine guidelines in the state’s ‘mask to stay’ and ‘test to play’ guidance.”

The Ohio Department of Health has released a [flow chart](#) based on the CDC’s updated guidance following an exposure to someone with COVID-19. Regardless of vaccination status or symptoms, anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 must isolate for at least 5 days. However, if symptoms are improving, isolation may end on the sixth day following either symptom onset or a positive COVID-19 test if the person consistently wears a mask for the next five days. Detailed quarantine and isolation guidance are available in the [flow chart](#). The Ohio Department of Health has also updated [K-12 school quarantine guidance](#) including “mask to stay” and “test to play” timelines accordingly.

There are many opportunities in Ohio to be vaccinated, including walk-in and scheduled appointments statewide at pharmacies, federally qualified health centers, doctor’s offices, community vaccination sites, and local health departments. There is ample supply of vaccine for boosters, as well as first and second doses, for Ohioans. Ohioans can check their eligibility and book an appointment online at [gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://gettheshot.coronavirus.ohio.gov) or by calling 1-833-427-5634.

Ohioans who want to learn more about the safety, efficacy, and side effects of COVID-19 vaccines should talk to their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist, or visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/vaccine) to learn more.

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### ***About the Ohio Department of Health***

*The Ohio Department of Health’s mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans by transforming the state’s public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams; addressing the community conditions and inequities that lead to disparities in health outcomes; and implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions.*

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE COVID-19

Regardless of Symptoms or Vaccination Status



- Stay home for the next five days regardless of symptoms or vaccination status.



- Stay away from other people as much as possible (including those in your own household).

- If you can't stay away from other people, wear a three-layer (or better) mask.



- Do you have a fever or other symptoms that haven't started to get better on day six?



**YES**



- Stay home until your fever is gone and other symptoms are better.



- Wear a mask for the next five days.



**NO**



- Resume activities with a mask.
- Wear a mask for the next five days.

If you are having symptoms of COVID-19 and waiting for your test results, stay home until you get your results.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO HAS COVID-19\*\*

And, Your COVID-19 Vaccines Are Up-to-Date

- If you received a booster dose of any COVID-19 vaccine.

or

- If you completed the primary series\* of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine less than six months ago.

or

- If you completed the primary series\* of Johnson & Johnson vaccine less than two months ago.



- Wear a mask around others for 10 days after your last exposure.
- Test on day five.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive, stay home.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 in the 90 days before your exposure.

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- If you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WHO HAS COVID-19\*\*

And, You are Unvaccinated or Your Vaccines Are Not Up-to-Date

- If you are unvaccinated or only received one dose of Pfizer or Moderna.

or

- If you completed the primary series\* of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine more than six months ago.

or

- If you completed the primary series\* of Johnson & Johnson vaccine more than two months ago and no booster.



For 5 days

- Stay home for five days after your last exposure, then wear a mask around others for the next five days.
- Test on day five.
- If you develop symptoms or test positive, stay home.

\*A primary series consists of one dose of Johnson & Johnson vaccine; or two doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine; or three doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine if you received an additional dose because you are immunocompromised.

Thank you to Clark County Combined Health District for sharing its graphic with the Ohio Department of Health.

## Mask to Stay/Test to Play Option

Quarantining students at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 in a school environment has the unintended consequence of reducing in-school learning and can be an added strain on parents, schools, and local health departments (LHDs). While vaccination and mask usage are critical components to ensuring a safe school environment, we offer an in-school alternative to quarantining students and school staff at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 in a school environment to support in-school learning and reduce the strain.

This recommendation is informed by a growing body of national experience, a pilot in Warren County, and experience shared by other LHDs that points toward a low number of individuals with direct contact to a COVID-19 positive individual within a school setting who convert to positive cases. Based on this information and the success of the Warren County pilot, we recommend the following for K-12 students and staff exposed to COVID-19 in a school setting.

***Please note: Eligibility to participate in mask to stay/test to play is contingent on the exposure being in the school setting or school-related activities. This does not apply to household exposures or exposures outside of the school setting or school-related activities.***

### Mask to Stay

Direct contacts, regardless of vaccination or masking status, may remain in the classroom environment if they do the following:

- Wear a mask for 10 days after their last date of exposure.
- Self-monitor, or parent-monitor, for [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19 (regardless of level of severity).

*Direct contacts for COVID-19 are those individuals who are identified as being directly exposed to COVID-19 by the positive case. Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus and does not require physical contact to spread. It is spread through sneezing, coughing, talking, and breathing. These factors should be considered when determining level of exposure and direct contacts. Best practice for distancing is 3 ft with everyone masked, 6 ft if the individual is not masked.*

*Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended.*

*Parents and students are responsible for symptom monitoring; however, if nurses/school staff see a child exhibiting symptoms they should act [accordingly](#).*

*We recognize that some students are unable to wear a mask because of a medical condition or developmental disability as recognized by their medical provider. In these instances, we recommend that LHDs and schools work together to determine if there is a safe way of allowing these students to remain in the school setting. When making this determination, the level of risk and the safety and health of other students must be considered.*

**To assess whether an unmasked student can safely remain in the classroom setting, consider:**

- *The masking policy of the school.*
  - *Universal masking policies reduce the risk of spread.*
  - *The more students who are wearing masks, the less the virus can spread. This reduces risk.*
- *The testing policy of the school.*
  - *Testing is another strategy that schools could choose to implement.*
  - *The more testing a school does, the greater the chance of identifying and isolating positive cases to reduce the risk of infecting others.*
  - *If districts are planning to allow an unmasked student to remain in the classroom setting, the student should be tested daily.*
- *The social distancing strategy of the school.*
  - *Maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more around the exposed and direct contact without a mask reduces risk.*
- *The ability of the student to follow mitigation strategies/behaviors.*
  - *Proper hand hygiene.*
  - *Proper cough etiquette.*
  - *Maintaining personal distance.*
- *Community transmission rates.*
  - *Community transmission rates should be considered.*
  - *High level of transmission rates in communities creates increased risk of transmission within the school environment and a greater chance for outbreaks.*

When used in combination, these strategies provide an increased layer of protection for the exposed direct contact and other students and staff. Layering mitigation strategies including masking, testing, social distancing and appropriate hygiene measures helps reduce the risk of virus spread.

## **Test to Play**

**Asymptomatic contacts may continue to participate in extracurricular activities if they do the following:**

*Wear a mask when able. (This includes: transportation; locker rooms; sitting/standing on the sidelines; and anytime the mask will not interfere with breathing, the activity, or create a safety hazard.)*

- Test on initial notification of exposure to COVID-19.
- Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended.

***Please Note: The tests referenced above are SARS-CoV-2 viral (PCR or antigen) tests. They should be proctored/observed by someone and cannot be an over the counter, at-home test that was self-administered without a proctor.***

Districts should consider same day testing for athletic competitions where there is the potential of school-to-school exposure. If students involved in competitions become positive for COVID-19, contact tracing with other team does not need to occur; instead, send a general letter to notify the other team of the potential exposure.

These proposed changes incorporate mask wearing and testing to reduce the chance of spread of COVID-19 within structured school settings and provides a safe alternative to quarantine.