October 1, 2020

Board Memo 066-2020: COVID-19 Update / USPS "Return-To-Work" Guidance Revised

Executive Board,

USPS HQ made some clarifications to the COVID-19 Employee Return-to-Work (RTW) guidelines as the last revisions to the document were made on May 6, 2020. Clarifications were made to ensure that the RTW guidelines remained consistent with CDC guidance (see additional attachments). The RTW document is effective 9/30/20 and is being distributed to the field.

Please share this NAPS board memo and respective attachments with your membership. This information will also be posted on the Bulletin Board section of the NAPS website, naps.org.

Thank you and stay safe.

NAPS Headquarters

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

WEAR A MASK. PROTECT OTHERS.

When to Quarantine

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU >

Updated Aug. 16, 2020   Print

Note:

At this time, we do not know if someone can be re-infected with COVID-19. Data to date show that a person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within 3 months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19.

There are no confirmed reports to date of a person being reinfected with COVID-19 within 3 months of initial infection. However, additional research is ongoing. Therefore, if a person who has recovered from COVID-19 has new symptoms of COVID-19, the person may need an evaluation for reinfection, especially if the person has had close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. The person should isolate and contact a healthcare provider to be evaluated for other causes of their symptoms, and possibly retested.

CDC recommends that all people, whether or not they have had COVID-19, take steps to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. Wash hands regularly, stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible, and wear masks.

For more information:

- Media statement
- Information for Healthcare Professionals

Quarantine is used to keep someone *who might have been exposed to COVID-19* away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Who needs to quarantine?

People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19—excluding people who have had COVID-19 within the past 3 months.

People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

What counts as close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

Steps to take	**Stay home and monitor your health**

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19
- Watch for fever (100.4◦F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19

When to start and end quarantine

You should stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.

For all of the following scenarios, even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.
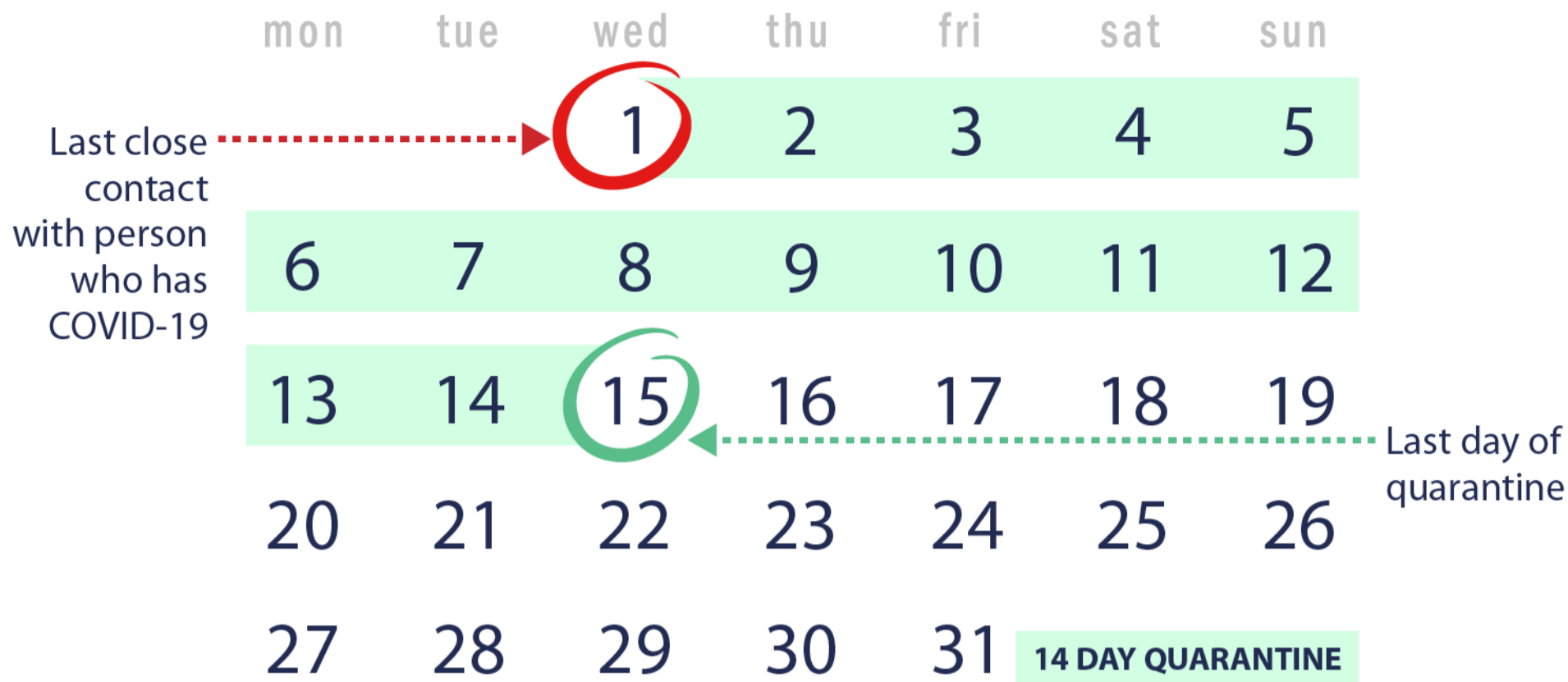
See scenarios below to determine when you can end quarantine and be around others.

Scenario 1: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19—will not have further close contact

I had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 and will not have further contact or interactions with the person while they are sick (e.g., co-worker, neighbor, or friend).

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact.

Date of last close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days= end of quarantine

	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
Last close contact with person who has COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

Last day of quarantine

14 DAY QUARANTINE

Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 2: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 — live with the person but can avoid further close contact

I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g., roommate, partner, family member), and that person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have had no close contact with the person since they isolated.

Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from when the person with COVID-19 began home isolation.

Date person with COVID-19 began home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine

	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
Person with COVID-19 starts home isolation	1	2	3	4	5
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31		

Last day of quarantine

14 DAY QUARANTINE

Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 3. Under quarantine and had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19

I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started my 14-day quarantine period because we had close contact. What if I ended up having close contact with the person who is sick during my quarantine? What if another household member gets sick with COVID-19? Do I need to restart my quarantine?

Yes. You will have to restart your quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. **Any time a new household member gets sick with COVID-19 and you had close contact, you will need to restart your quarantine.**

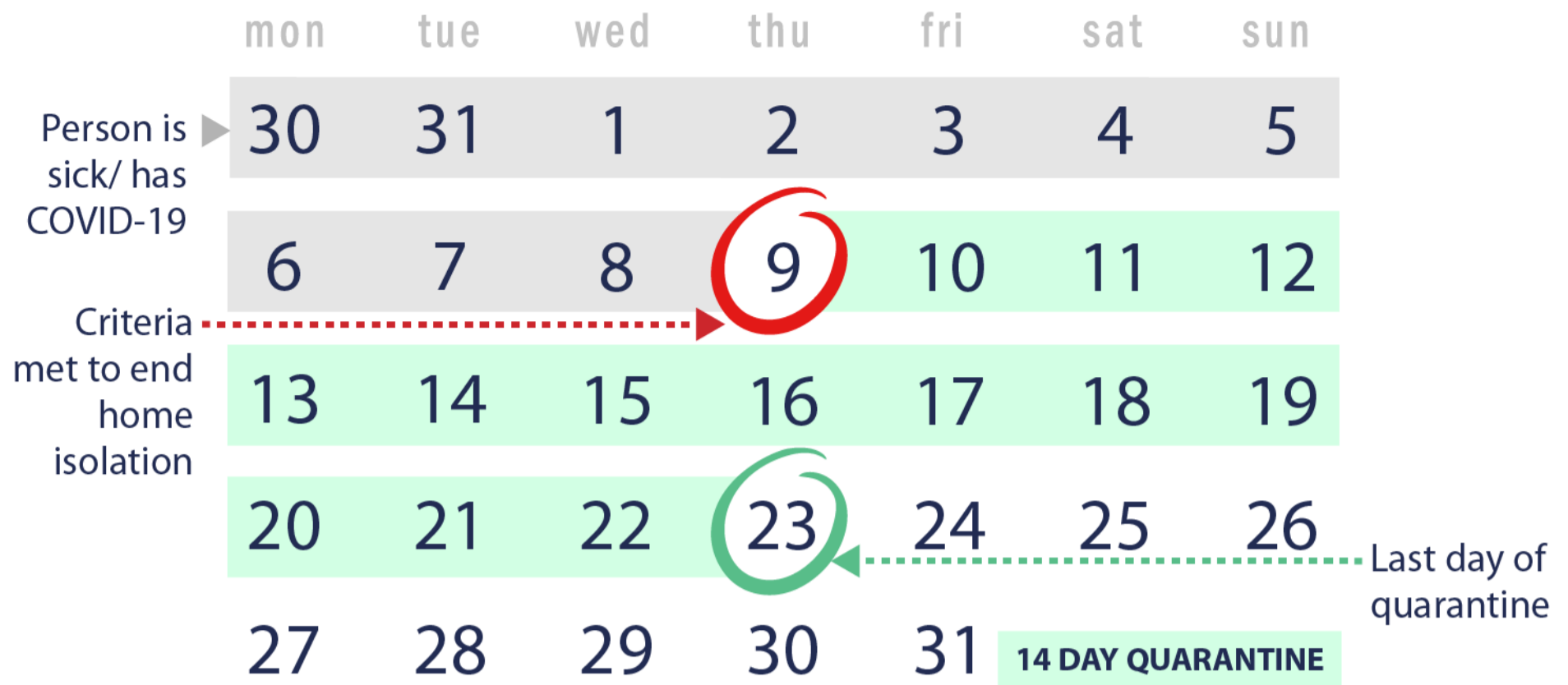Date of additional close contact with person who has COVID-19 + 14 days = end of quarantine
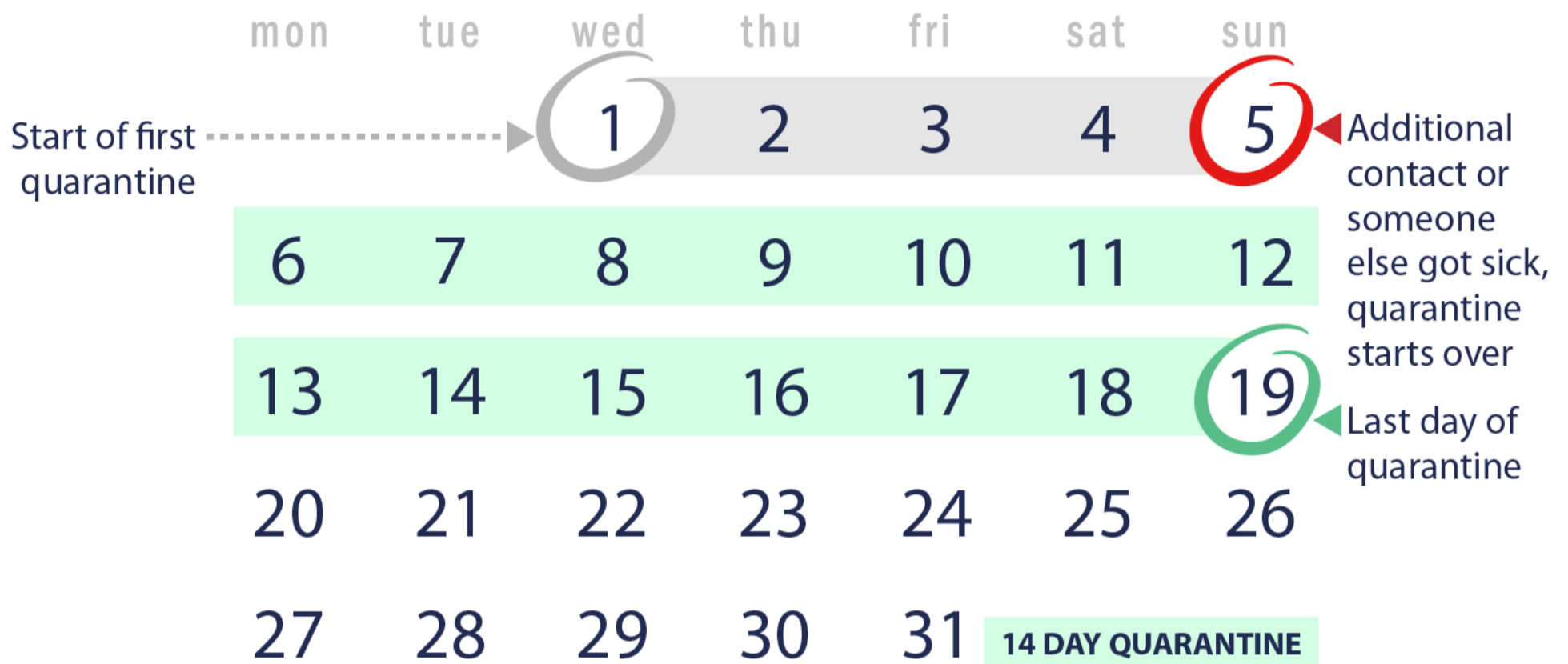
Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Scenario 4: Live with someone who has COVID–19 and cannot avoid continued close contact

I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, don't have a separate bedroom to isolate the person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.

You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation.

Date the person with COVID-19 ends home isolation + 14 days = end of quarantine

	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
Person is ▶	30	31	1	2	3	4	5
sick/ has COVID-19	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Criteria met to end home isolation	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	27	28	29	30	31	**14 DAY QUARANTINE**	

Last day of quarantine

Please note if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Last Updated Aug. 16, 2020

CDC Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

MENU ›

WEAR A MASK. PROTECT OTHERS.

When You Can be Around Others After You Had or Likely Had COVID-19
When You Can be Around Others

Updated Aug. 16, 2020   Print

Updated Aug. 16, 2020

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from other people. Staying away from others helps stop the spread of COVID-19. **If you have** an emergency warning sign **(including trouble breathing),** get emergency medical care immediately.

Note:

At this time, we do not know if someone can be re-infected with COVID-19. Data to date show that a person who has had and recovered from COVID-19 may have low levels of virus in their bodies for up to 3 months after diagnosis. This means that if the person who has recovered from COVID-19 is retested within 3 months of initial infection, they may continue to have a positive test result, even though they are not spreading COVID-19.

There are no confirmed reports to date of a person being reinfected with COVID-19 within 3 months of initial infection. However, additional research is ongoing. Therefore, if a person who has recovered from COVID-19 has new symptoms of COVID-19, the person may need an evaluation for reinfection, especially if the person has had close contact with someone infected with COVID-19. The person should isolate and contact a healthcare provider to be evaluated for other causes of their symptoms, and possibly retested.

CDC recommends that all people, whether or not they have had COVID-19, take steps to prevent getting and spreading COVID-19. Wash hands regularly, stay at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible, and wear masks.

For more information:

- Media statement
- Information for Healthcare Professionals

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations.

Find CDC's recommendations for your situation below.

I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms

You can be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving*

Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation

Most people do not require testing to decide when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your test results.

Note that these recommendations **do not** apply to persons with severe COVID-19 or with severely weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). These persons should follow the guidance below for "I was severely ill with COVID-19 or have a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication. When can I be around others?"

I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since you had a positive viral test for COVID-19. Most people do not require testing to decide when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your test results.

If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for "I think or know I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms."

I was severely ill with COVID-19 or have a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication. When can I be around others?

People who are severely ill with COVID-19 might need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared. Persons who are severely immunocompromised may require testing to determine when they can be around others. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information. If testing is available in your community, it may be recommended by your healthcare provider. Your healthcare provider will let you know if you can resume being around other people based on the results of your testing.

Your doctor may work with an infectious disease expert or your local health department to determine whether testing will be necessary before you can be around others.

For Anyone Who Has Been Around a Person with COVID-19

Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home for 14 days **after their last exposure** to that person.

However, anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who:

- developed COVID-19 illness within the previous 3 months **and**
- has recovered **and**

- remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath)

does not need to stay home.

For Healthcare Professionals

If you are a healthcare professional who thinks or knows you had COVID-19, you should follow the same recommendations listed above for when you can resume being around others outside the workplace. When you can return to work depends on different factors and situations. For information on when you can return to work, see the following:

Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection (Interim Guidance)

I Think or Know I had COVID-19, and I had Symptoms. When can I be Around Others?

I Think or Know I had COVID-19, and I had Symptoms. When can I be Around Others?

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from others. When you can be around others depends on different factors for different situations.

I Had COVID-19, But No Symptoms. When Can I Be with Others?

I Had COVID-19, But No Symptoms. When Can I Be with Others?

If you have or think you might have COVID-19, it is important to stay home and away from others. When you can be around others depends on different factors for different situations.

More information

What to Do If You Are Sick

Caring for Someone at Home

Quarantine and Isolation

Symptom-Based Strategy to Discontinue Isolation for Persons with COVID-19

Last Updated Aug. 16, 2020

Criteria for Return to Work for Employees after an absence related to COVID-19

The following information is provided to assist you as managers and supervisors when an employee has indicated their intent to return to work following an absence related to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Immediately upon employee notification of intent to return to work, the responsible supervisor or manager must:

1. Inform the employee they may not return to work until they have been cleared by a Postal Service physician or nurse;
2. Ask the employee for a phone number at which they can be reached;
3. Inform the employee they will be contacted by a Postal Service physician or nurse for a telephonic interview; *and* then
4. Immediately notify the District Occupational Health Nurse Administrator (OHNA) that there is an employee who has requested to return to work and provide the OHNA with the employee's contact information (if your District OHNA is not available, please contact your District HR Manager for guidance).

Employee Absence due to Close Contact Tracing or Potential Exposure

The employee can return to work after 14 days have passed since last close contact with a positive person, provided the employee has not developed COVID-19 symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19.

Employee Absence due to Symptoms of COVID-19 (without testing)

- The employee can return to work after these three things have happened:

    - Employee has had no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of any fever-reducing medication);
      AND
    - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath has improved)*;
      AND
    - At least 10 days have passed since COVID-19 symptoms first appeared.

* Loss of taste and/or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the return to work.

Employee Absence due to a Positive Diagnosis (laboratory confirmation):

If an employee notifies you of their intent to return to work following a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 result, do not request documentation for the employee to return to work. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and unable to provide such documentation in a timely manner due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather, you must follow the process outlined below *prior* to allowing an employee to return to work.

The **Postal Service physician or nurse** will review the information and make a final determination on the return-to-work request. Employees are not permitted to return to work without written clearance from a Postal Service physician or nurse if they have received a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 result.

For your information, per the CDC, return to work (discontinuation of isolation) should be determined using a symptom-based or time-based strategy, depending on whether the employee developed symptoms.

Employees **with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have had symptoms of COVID-19** can stop home isolation and return to work following an interview with a Postal Service physician or nurse to confirm:

    - Employee has had no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of any fever-reducing medication);
      AND
    - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when cough or shortness of breath has improved)*;
      AND

- At least 10 days have passed since COVID-19 symptoms first appeared.

* Loss of taste and/or smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the return to work.

Employees **with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have <u>not </u>had symptoms of COVID-19** can stop home isolation and return to work following an interview with a Postal Service physician or nurse to confirm:

- 10 days have passed since the employee's positive COVID-19 test.

Contact your District HR Manager or District OHNA if you have any questions.