

Guidance for Daily COVID-19 Symptom Screening of Staff and Guests

Summary of May 18, 2021 Changes

- Updated information for [fully vaccinated individuals](#) to align with CDC recommendations.

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Health recommends employers use this guidance to screen staff and guests (but not customers in retail) at the start of each shift or visit to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What is symptom screening?

[Infection prevention in the workplace](#) is important to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Screening is one way employers can lower the chance of COVID-19 transmission. Screening will not identify people not yet showing symptoms, or who may be infected but show no symptoms.

Who should be screened?

Screen staff and guests who enter the workplace. This does not include customers who are in a public-facing area (for example, customers at a restaurant or supermarket).

When should a business screen staff and guests?

Screen staff and guests at the start of every shift or visit.

How should a business set up symptom screening?

- If you plan in-person health checks, do them safely and respectfully. Employers may use physical distancing, barriers or walls, or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the screener. Using PPE alone is not as good as using physical distancing, and users need to be trained how to use PPE. Please refer to guidance from the Department of Labor & Industries [Which Mask for Which Task](#) document to determine the appropriate level of PPE.
- Give screening information in languages that staff and guests understand. Additional information can be found on the Department of Health's [Resources and Recommendations](#) page.
- Do health checks in a way that helps keep people from crowding, such as offering more than one screening entrance into the building.

- To prevent stigma and discrimination, make staff health screenings as private as possible. Do not judge staff or guests based on race or country of origin.
- Keep medical status and history safe from others. Follow guidance from the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) for safekeeping of medical records from health checks.
- Keep a record of daily symptom screening results for at least 28 days.
- Follow the directions below on [How to screen for COVID-19](#). A additional screening tool example is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/screening/index.html>.

How to screen for COVID-19

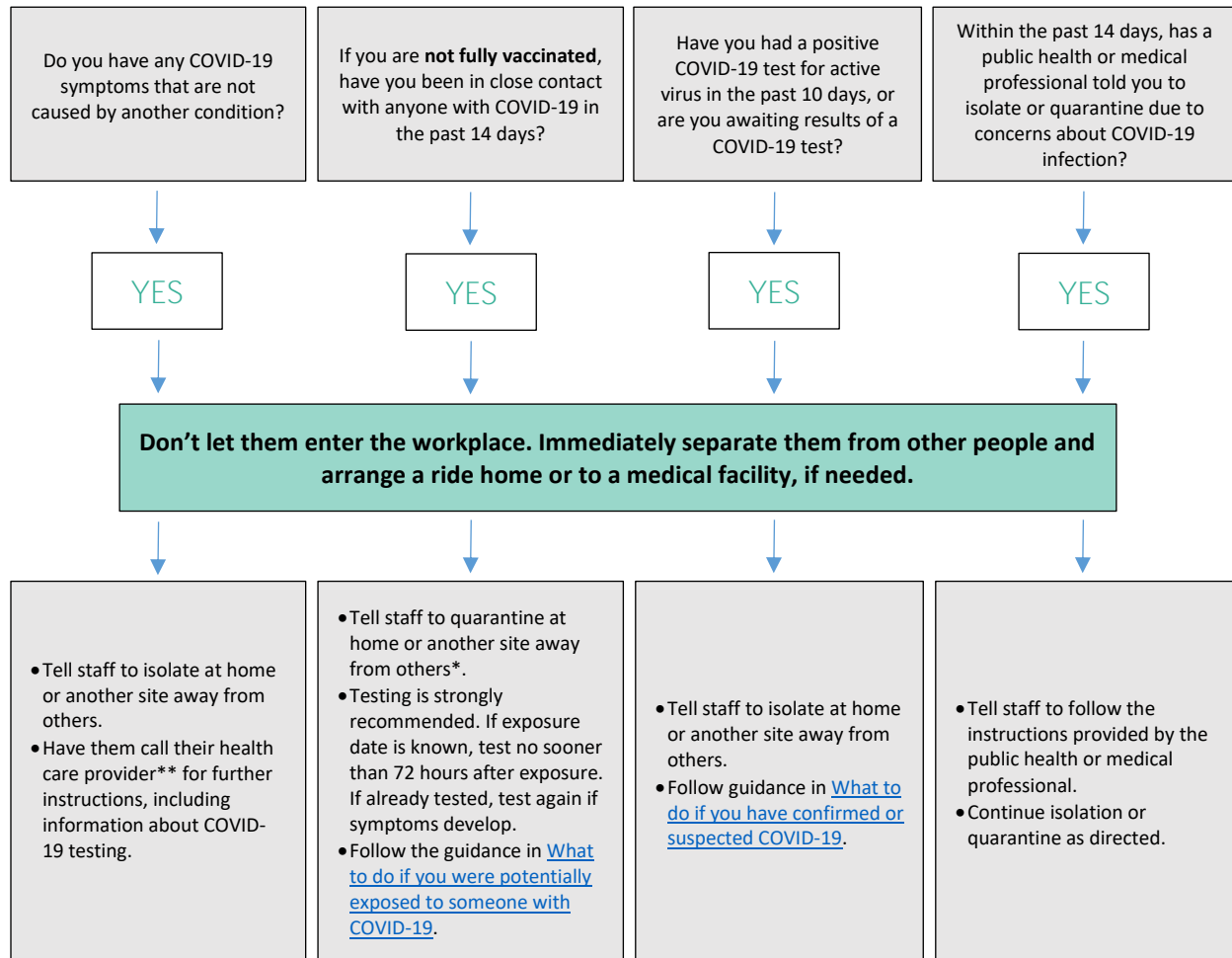
Ask the following questions.

1. Do you have any of these [symptoms](#) that are not caused by another condition?
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Recent loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
2. If you are **not fully vaccinated**, have you been in close contact with anyone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days? Close contact is being within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period with a person; or having direct contact with fluids from a person with COVID-19 with or without wearing a mask (i.e., being coughed or sneezed on).
3. Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past 10 days, or are you awaiting results of a COVID-19 test?
4. Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

What's the difference between isolation and quarantine?

- **Isolation** is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms, are awaiting test results, or have tested positive. Isolation means you stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time to avoid spreading illness.
- **Quarantine** is what you do if you have been exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine means you stay home and away from others for the recommended period of time in case you are infected and are contagious. Quarantine becomes isolation if you later test positive for COVID-19 or develop symptoms.

What should a business do if staff answer “yes” to these questions?



*Bringing exposed critical infrastructure or essential workers who are not experiencing any symptoms and have not tested positive back into onsite operations should be used as a **last resort and only in limited circumstances**, such as when cessation of operation of a facility may cause serious harm or danger to public health or safety. See [this guidance from the CDC](#) and contact your local health department for more information.

**If somebody does not have a doctor or health care provider: many locations have free or low-cost testing, regardless of immigration status. See the [Department of Health's Testing FAQ](#) or call the [WA State COVID-19 Information Hotline](#).

Quarantine for Fully Vaccinated Persons

Fully vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with COVID-19 are **not** required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (see [When You've Been Fully Vaccination](#) section below for more information.)
- Have not had symptoms since current COVID-19 exposure.

Quarantine When You Are Not Yet Fully Vaccinated

Current quarantine recommendations are to stay in quarantine for 14 days after last contact. **This is the safest option.** Monitor symptoms during this time, and if any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) develop during the 14 days, get tested. Certain high-risk settings or groups **should** use the 14-day quarantine option:

- People who work or stay in an acute or long-term healthcare setting.
- People who work or stay in a correctional facility.
- People who work or stay in a shelter or transitional housing.
- People who live in communal housing such as dormitories, fraternities or sororities.
- People who work in crowded work situations where physical distancing is impossible due to the nature of the work such as in a warehouse or factory.
- People who work on fishing or seafood processing vessels.

If this is not possible, stay in quarantine for 10 days after your last contact, without additional testing. If any COVID-19 symptoms develop during the 10 days, stay in quarantine the full 14 days and get tested. **Keep watching for symptoms until day 14.**

Under special circumstances it may be possible to end quarantine after 7 full days beginning after last contact *if* you have been without symptoms *and* after receiving a negative result from a test (get tested no sooner than 48 hours before ending quarantine.) *This will depend on availability of testing resources.* **Keep watching for symptoms until day 14.**

Consult your local health jurisdiction to determine the best option for your specific circumstances.

Prevent the spread of COVID-19

- If you are unvaccinated, **use cloth face coverings and maintain physical distance** to protect yourself and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Take measures to [improve ventilation](#), where possible.
 - A cloth face covering is anything that completely covers your mouth and nose, and fits securely on the sides of your face and under your chin. It should be made of two or more layers of tightly woven fabric with ties or straps that go around your head or behind your ears. A face shield with a drape can be used by people with developmental, behavioral, or medical conditions that prevent them from wearing a cloth face covering. Face shields may also be used by children in childcare, day camp, and K-12 settings. In the workplace, masks or respirators may be required as they are more protective than cloth face coverings.
 - Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends strategies](#) to improve mask fitting to more effectively slow the spread of COVID-19. These strategies include wearing a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask, knotting the ear loops of a medical procedure mask, using a mask fitter, or using a nylon covering over a mask. In addition, DOH does not recommend the use of masks with exhalation valves or vents, or single layer bandanas and gaiters. (Respirators with exhalation valves are okay when used in accordance with guidance published by DOH and [L&I](#).)

- **Clean your hands often.** Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Throw used tissues away and wash your hands.
- **Clean “high-touch” surfaces frequently,** like counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe and follow the directions on the label.
- **Don’t share personal items with anyone,** including dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with people or pets in your home.

When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.

If it has been less than 2 weeks since your final dose, or if you still need to get your second dose, you are NOT fully protected. Keep taking all [prevention measures](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

Per [CDC recommendations](#), people who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear face coverings or physically distance outdoors or indoors, except in these settings:

- Health care settings like hospitals, long-term care, or doctor’s offices
- Correctional facilities
- Homeless shelters
- Schools

The [federal order](#) requiring masks on public transportation still applies.

Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine or get tested if identified as a close contact of someone who has COVID-19 unless symptomatic. If symptoms develop, follow [quarantine recommendations](#) and [get tested](#). Residents or employees of group settings, like a correctional or detention facility or group home, should quarantine and get tested if identified as a close contact regardless of vaccination status.

See the [DOH guidance on masks and face coverings](#) for complete information on the current mandates and health orders in place.

Refer to L&I for current information on face covering requirements in the workplace. Businesses retain the right to require masks in their establishments for staff and/or customers, and to ask for proof of vaccination.

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee’s proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person's race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. This is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share only accurate information to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions? Call our COVID-19 Information hotline: **1-800-525-0127**

Monday – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday and [observed state holidays](#), 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.