

Evaluation and Management of Persons with New Unexplained Symptoms of COVID-19

Summary of May 18, 2021 changes

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

Introduction

Schools, child care facilities, and non-health care workplaces can use this guidance to make decisions about how long sick individuals should stay home.

What to do if someone has COVID-19 symptoms but [has not been around anyone diagnosed with COVID-19](#)

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with these symptoms or combination of symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- New loss of taste or smell
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea (at least 2 loose stools in the past 24 hours)

Sometimes we describe COVID-19 symptoms as “class A” or “class B” to decide how long a person should isolate. Table 1 shows which symptoms are in each class.

Who should get tested for COVID-19?

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should get tested, even if they have not been around anyone diagnosed with COVID-19. People who have COVID-19 symptoms but have not been around anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 should consider visiting a health care provider.

Who should stay home from work?

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should not go to work and stay home, including critical infrastructure essential workers. If someone starts having COVID-19 symptoms while they are at work, they should go home immediately.

How long should someone with COVID-19 symptoms stay home?

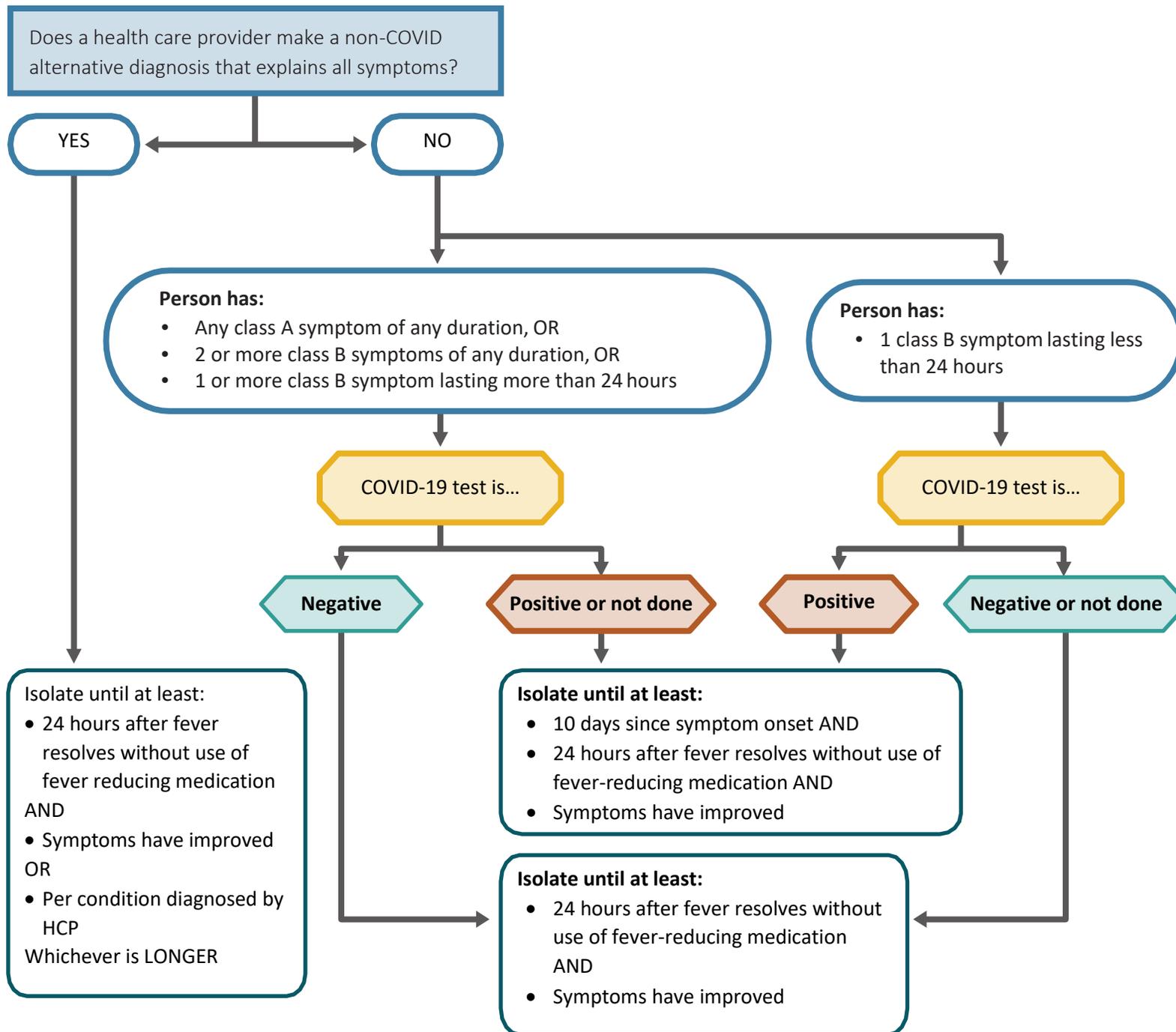
The amount of time someone should stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms can be different depending on:

- Which symptoms they have (class A or B)
- If a health care provider diagnosed them with something other than COVID-19 that explains all symptoms
- Results of the COVID-19 test

See Table 1 below and the flow chart on the next page to decide how long sick individuals should stay home.

Table 1: Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19

Class A Symptoms	Class B Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever (subjective or greater than or equal to 100.4°F)• Chills• Cough• Loss of sense of taste and/or smell• Shortness of breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fatigue• Headache• Muscle or body aches• Sore throat• Congestion or runny nose• Nausea or vomiting• Diarrhea (at least 2 loose stools in 24 hours)



What to do if someone has COVID-19 symptoms and has confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19

What does it mean to have an exposure to COVID-19?

Exposure to COVID-19 means that someone has been within 6 feet of a person with a confirmed COVID-19 infection for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Who should isolate?

Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19 and has symptoms should isolate at home away from others. See Table 2 to decide how long to isolate.

What if someone was exposed to COVID-19 but does not have symptoms?

Stay in quarantine for 14 days after your last contact. **This is the safest option.** Monitor your symptoms during this time, and if you have any COVID-19 symptoms 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 you have any COVID-19 symptoms 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 your 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 with your local health jurisdiction to determine the best option for your individual circumstances. See the [When You're Fully Vaccinated Section](#) below for information on quarantine for fully vaccinated individuals.

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 Assistance Hotline](#).

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

- **Isolation** is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms, or have tested positive for COVID-19. 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 COVID-19 symptoms.

See [this infographic](#) for more information about isolation and quarantine.

How long should someone stay home if they have COVID-19 symptoms and have confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19?

See Table 2 on next page for isolation or quarantine recommendations for people with COVID-19 symptoms who were exposed to COVID-19 in the 14 days before having symptoms.

Table 2: Recommendations for people with COVID-19 symptoms and confirmed or suspected exposure

COVID-19 Test Result	Recommendation
Positive	Isolate until at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days since symptoms started (up to 20 days for those who are severely ill or immunocompromised) AND • 24 hours after fever resolves without use of fever reducing medications AND • Symptoms have improved
Negative	Quarantine at home away from others until: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 days after last exposure OR Isolate until at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days since symptoms started (up to 20 days for those who are severely ill or immunocompromised) AND • 24 hours after fever resolves without use of fever reducing medications AND • Symptoms have improved Whichever is longer
No Test Performed	Isolate until at least: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 days since symptoms started (up to 20 days for those who are severely ill or immunocompromised) AND • 24 hours after fever resolves without use of fever reducing medications AND • Symptoms have improved

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 about COVID-19? Call our hotline: **1-800-525-0127**, Monday – Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., 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.