



Department of Health

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TO: Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Adult Care Homes, and Other Congregate Settings Where Populations Vulnerable to COVID-19 Reside

FROM: NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) Bureau of Healthcare Associated Infections (BHAi)

Health Advisory: Discontinuation of Isolation for Patients with COVID-19 Who Are Hospitalized or in Nursing Homes, Adult Care Homes, or Other Congregate Settings with Vulnerable Residents

Please distribute immediately to:
Administrators, Infection Preventionists, Medical Directors, and Nursing Directors

Recent guidance allows for discontinuation of isolation for patients with COVID-19 when they meet the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **AND**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

However, hospitalized patients or older adults may have longer periods of infectivity, and hospitals, nursing homes, adult care facilities, and certain other congregate living facilities, are settings with highly vulnerable patients and residents. Therefore, for patients who are admitted to or remain in these settings, NYSDOH recommends discontinuation of transmission-based precautions for patients with COVID-19, when they meet the following more stringent conditions:

- Non-test-based strategy:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever (greater than or equal to 100.0) without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **AND**
 - At least **14 days** have passed since symptoms attributed to COVID-19 first appeared.
 - For patients who were asymptomatic at the time of their first positive test and remain asymptomatic, at least 14 days have passed since the first positive test.
- Test-based strategy: If testing is available to a facility through in-house or commercial means, the following test-based strategy may also be considered.
 - Lack of fever (greater than and equal to 100.0), without fever-reducing medications; **AND**
 - Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **AND**
 - Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA, from at least two consecutive tests

conducted on recommended specimens (nasopharyngeal, nasal and oropharyngeal, or nasal and saliva), collected greater than or equal to 24 hours apart.

- For patients who were asymptomatic at the time of their first positive test and remain asymptomatic, testing for release from isolation may begin a minimum of 7 days from the first positive test.

These recommendations also apply to persons suspected of having COVID-19. The test-based strategy is strongly preferred for severely immunocompromised patients (e.g. treated with immunosuppressive drugs, stem cell or solid organ transplant recipients, inherited immunodeficiency, or poorly controlled HIV). If the test strategy is not used for individuals severely immunocompromised, the case should be discussed with the local health department or with NYSDOH.

Patients who remain in, or are admitted, to a nursing home, adult care facility, or other congregate living facility with vulnerable residents, and meet criteria for discontinuation of transmission-based precautions using the non-test-based strategy but who remain symptomatic, such as with a persistent cough, should be: (1) placed in a single room or be cohorted with other recovering residents who had confirmed COVID-19; (2) remain in their room; and (3) wear a facemask when caregivers enter the room.

General questions or comments about this advisory can be sent to covidhospitaldinfo@health.ny.gov, covidnursinghomeinfo@health.ny.gov, covidadultcareinfo@health.ny.gov, or icp@health.ny.gov.