

UPDATE: Public Health Recommendations for People Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19

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TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Alison V. Beam, JD, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Public Health Recommendations for People Fully Vaccinated Against COVID-19
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This transmission is a “Health Update,” provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

- This guidance replaces PA-HAN-559 and provides clarification on quarantine recommendations for persons exposed to SARS-CoV-2.
- This guidance applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for emergency use by FDA or WHO.
- Persons in non-healthcare congregate settings, high-density workplaces, and dormitories who are fully vaccinated and asymptomatic should be tested after an exposure to COVID-19, but quarantine is not necessary.
- Fully vaccinated asymptomatic people with no known exposure should be exempted from routine screening testing programs.
- Regardless of vaccination status, any person with new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 still needs to isolate and be evaluated for SARS-CoV-2 testing.
- If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) provides this guidance based on available information about COVID-19 and is subject to change.

On April 27, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated their [recommendations](#) for individuals who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Based on these updated recommendations, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) is updating guidance for individuals exposed to COVID-19. This guidance, which replaces [PA-HAN-559](#), provides clarification on quarantine guidance and public health mitigation strategies (e.g., masking, social distancing) for those who are fully vaccinated.

This guidance applies to COVID-19 vaccines currently authorized for emergency use by the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)](#), and to COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized for emergency use by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).

Guidance for fully vaccinated individuals in healthcare settings can be found in the [updated healthcare infection prevention and control recommendations](#).

Recommendations for Asymptomatic Vaccinated Individuals

Asymptomatic fully vaccinated people who are not residents or inpatients in healthcare settings do not need to quarantine after exposure to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 provided they meet the following criteria:

- They are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine); AND
- They have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

Persons who do not meet both above criteria should continue to follow guidance for individuals who are not vaccinated after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

It is recommended that fully vaccinated people with no COVID-19-like symptoms and no known exposure should be exempted from routine screening testing programs, if feasible.

Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread SARS-CoV-2 and can now travel at low risk to themselves within the United States. International travelers need to pay close attention to the [situation at their international destinations](#) before traveling due to the spread of new variants and because the burden of COVID-19 varies globally.

CDC and DOH prevention measures continue to apply to all travelers, including those who are vaccinated. All travelers are [required to wear a mask](#) on all planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.

Additionally, DOH recommends COVID-19 prevention measures such as masking, physical distancing, and hand hygiene. CDC has also recently provided [guidance](#) on how fully vaccinated people can safely visit with other fully vaccinated people or with unvaccinated people who are low-risk for severe COVID-19 disease in private settings.

Regardless of vaccination status, any person with new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 still needs to isolate and be evaluated for SARS-CoV-2 testing.

Recommendations for Asymptomatic Vaccinated Patients or Residents in Healthcare Settings

Fully vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings should continue to quarantine following prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection. In long-term care facilities, other types of known exposure may also warrant quarantine. Quarantine in healthcare settings includes the use of Transmission-Based Precautions for COVID-19 per [PA-HAN-563](#). Outpatients should also be cared for using Transmission-Based Precautions for COVID-19

Recommendations for Testing without Quarantine After Exposure for Vaccinated People

CDC and DOH recommend that testing but NOT quarantine occur after an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in the following circumstances:

- Fully vaccinated residents and employees of non-healthcare congregates settings (e.g., correctional and detention facilities, homeless shelters)
- Fully vaccinated employees of high-density workplaces (e.g., poultry processing plants)
- Fully vaccinated dormitory residents (or similar high-density housing settings) at educational institutions.

Testing in these settings is still recommended because they may face high turnover of residents, a higher risk of transmission, and challenges in maintaining recommended physical distancing. In [PA-HAN-527](#), DOH recommends being tested at least 2-3 days after being exposed to COVID-19.

Recommendations for Individuals Who Are Not Fully Vaccinated

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and are identified as a [close contact](#) of a COVID-19 case must quarantine. An individual is considered fully vaccinated when 2 or more weeks have passed after the receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose vaccine series, or 2 or more weeks have passed after receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine. Quarantine is used to separate someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. This individual may or may not develop illness. The most protective recommended quarantine period remains at 14 days after the date of last exposure (Day 0) to a person who is infectious with SARS-CoV-2. CDC has provided options for [reduced quarantine](#) which balances the reduced burden to the individual under quarantine against a small possibility of increasing the spread of the virus.

The following are options to reduce the 14-day quarantine:

- Quarantine can end after Day 10 without testing and if [no symptoms](#) have been reported during daily monitoring. However, it is recommended that symptom monitoring continue through day 14.
- If diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, quarantine can end after Day 7 if a diagnostic specimen (i.e., RT-PCR or antigen) tests negative and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring.
 - The specimen must be collected and tested within 48 hours before the time of planned quarantine discontinuation (e.g., in anticipation of testing delays), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.

In order to discontinue quarantine after Day 7, specimens must be collected on or after Day 5. Specimens collected prior to this date will not be sufficient to allow quarantine to end early. Either RT-PCR or antigen tests would be acceptable testing methods for discontinuation of quarantine.

Persons can discontinue quarantine at these time points only if the following criteria are also met:

- No clinical evidence of COVID-19 has been elicited by daily symptom monitoring during the entirety of quarantine up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued; and,
- Daily symptom monitoring continues through quarantine Day 14; and,
- Persons need to adhere strictly through Day 14 after exposure to all recommended nonpharmaceutical interventions (e.g., masking, physical distancing).
 - If any symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and contact the DOH at 1-877-PA-HEALTH, their local health department, or their healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status.

Testing for the purpose of discontinuation of quarantine prior to day 10 should be considered only if it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of symptomatic persons seeking evaluation for infection must be prioritized.

Persons who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. If they do become symptomatic, the person should isolate and seek testing.

DOH recommends that non-healthcare congregate settings, such as prisons and shelters, continue to follow recommendations for a 14-day quarantine period for individuals who are not fully vaccinated. COVID-19 transmission within these setting can be difficult to control, and the increased transmission risk associated with shortening the quarantine time periods may be problematic in these settings.

If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

Individuals interested in receiving further PA-HANs are encouraged to register at <https://han.pa.gov/>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of April 28, 2021 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.