




STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES
 Bureau for Public Health
 Commissioner's Office

Bill J. Crouch
 Cabinet Secretary

Ayne Amjad, MD, MPH
 Commissioner & State Health Officer

INFORMATION UPDATE

TO: Public Health Partners

FROM: Ayne Amjad, MD, MPH 
 Commissioner and State Health Officer

DATE: December 28, 2021

RE: Update to Isolation and Quarantine Period for COVID-19

On December 27, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised guidelines for the isolation and quarantine period of COVID-19 given what is currently known about the Omicron variant. In accordance with the CDC, the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health recommends all public health partners utilize the shortened isolation and quarantine period for the general population.

Individual Tested Positive for COVID-19 (Isolate)	
Everyone, regardless of vaccination status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-isolate for 5 days • Release from isolation after day 5 if asymptomatic or symptoms are improving • Recommend wearing a well-fitted mask around others through day 10
Individual Was Exposed to COVID-19 (Quarantine)	
Fully vaccinated individuals with Pfizer or Moderna who completed their primary series within the last 6 months OR Fully vaccinated individuals with J&J/Janssen who completed their primary series within the last 2 months and who have not received their booster OR Fully vaccinated individuals who have received their booster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No quarantine is required unless symptoms develop • Recommend testing 5 days after exposure • Recommend wearing a well-fitted mask around others for 10 days • Recommend testing and staying home if symptoms develop
Fully vaccinated individuals with Pfizer or Moderna who completed their primary series over 6 months ago and who have not received their booster OR Fully vaccinated individuals with J&J/Janssen who completed their primary series over 2 months ago and who have not received their booster OR Unvaccinated individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarantine for 5 days from last exposure • Recommend testing 5 days after exposure • Recommend wearing a well-fitted mask around others for 10 days • Recommend testing and staying home if symptoms develop

Changes to isolation and quarantine guidance were driven by science surrounding the Omicron variant demonstrating that most of the transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and 2-3 days after. Therefore, people who test positive should isolate for 5 days, and if asymptomatic or have an improvement in symptoms at that time, they may leave isolation if they can continue to wear a well-fitted mask for an additional 5 days to minimize the risk of infecting others.

Data from South Africa and the United Kingdom demonstrate that vaccine effectiveness against Omicron infection with two doses of an mRNA vaccine is approximately 35%. A COVID-19 vaccine booster dose restores vaccine effectiveness against infection to 75%. For those exposed to COVID-19, data has consistently shown that people who are boosted or are less than 6 months out from their primary mRNA series or less than 2 months from the J&J/Janssen vaccine have the highest level of protection from COVID-19. Given the increased protection against Omicron infection following a booster dose, those who have received a booster dose are at low risk for infection, and therefore are at lower risk of transmission to others during the period following exposure.

In addition to the guidance issued for the general public, due to increased transmissibility of the Omicron variant and concerns about potential impacts on the healthcare system, the CDC revised its guidance for healthcare workers working in healthcare settings facing staffing shortages: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html>.

In anticipation of an Omicron surge, local health departments are encouraged to prioritize case investigations where the greatest public health impact to slow transmission can be made such as those individuals in congregate living settings. To keep up with the cases, local health departments should continue to only call positive COVID-19 cases. Local health departments should enlist help from positive cases to notify their close contacts so that family members, coworkers, and friends are aware they have been exposed and to ask them to self-quarantine.

Local health departments are encouraged to utilize the fact sheet, [Notifying Your Close Contacts](#), which can be found on the state's COVID-19 website (coronavirus.wv.gov) or sent via email or text to cases in Chexout.

We appreciate your continued efforts in preventing the transmission of COVID-19 in your communities during this challenging time.