

CDC Releases Updated Healthcare Worker Isolation and Quarantine Guidance to Prepare for Anticipated Increase in Omicron Cases

With the growing number of COVID-19 cases from the Omicron variant, and consistent with current understanding of the disease trajectory, CDC is releasing updated guidance for isolation and quarantine for healthcare workers, decreasing their isolation time after infection with COVID-19. Additionally, CDC is releasing an update to guidance for contingency and crisis management in the setting of significant healthcare worker shortages. These updates provide healthcare facilities with the strategies to limit the effects of staff shortages caused by COVID-19 on patient care and note that:

- Healthcare workers with COVID-19 who are asymptomatic can return to work after 7 days with a negative test, and that isolation time can be cut further if there are staffing shortages.
- Healthcare workers who have received all recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses including a booster do not need to quarantine at home following high-risk exposures.

Isolation relates to behavior after a confirmed infection, and quarantine is following exposure to the virus but without a confirmed infection.

These guidelines apply only to the healthcare workforce and may be revised to continue to protect both healthcare workers and patients as additional information on the Omicron variant becomes available to inform recommended actions. Additional information will be published as guidance on CDC's website soon and shared with healthcare organizations and provider groups. CDC continues to evaluate isolation and quarantine recommendations for the broader population as we learn about the Omicron variant and will update the public as appropriate. CDC strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 5 and older and boosters for everyone 16 and older – vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and our healthcare system from the impact of COVID-19.

The following is attributable to CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky:

“As the healthcare community prepares for an anticipated surge in patients due to Omicron, CDC is updating our recommendations to reflect what we know about infection and exposure in the context of vaccination and booster doses. Our goal is to keep healthcare personnel and patients safe, and to address and prevent undue burden on our healthcare facilities. Our priority, remains prevention—and I strongly encourage all healthcare personnel to get vaccinated and boosted.”