



# Nursing News Flash

Did you know?

March, 2024

On March 1, 2024, The CDC updated Respiratory Illness guidelines recommending a unified approach for isolation and prevention Strategies for all common respiratory illnesses including Covid-19.

The CDC recommends that **people who test positive for COVID-19, and other common respiratory illnesses base their isolation period on their symptoms.** Individuals can now end their isolation if they've been fever-free for 24 hours and other symptoms are improving (as in all common respiratory illnesses). Prevention strategies like wearing a mask are recommended for five days after ending isolation

## Why have these guidelines changed:

- The threat from Covid becomes more similar to other common respiratory viruses therefore the CDC is issuing Respiratory Virus guidelines rather than additional virus-specific guidance.
- Complications like multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) are less common
- Prevalence of Long Covid is decreasing
- Vaccines and treatments that decrease risk are widely available
- There is a high degree of population Immunity: more than 98% of the U.S. population now have some degree of immunity from vaccination, prior infection, or both

## When **should** you test for Covid: If you are at higher risk for getting very sick

- Older adults: generally 65 and older.
- Young children: Infants Especially those under 6 months thru age 4 years old
- Those with compromised immune system
- People with disabilities
- Pregnant Women

## When can you return to work or school/work after testing positive for Covid:

- When you have been fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medications for 24 hours.
- Your symptoms are improving overall for at least 24 hours

- You have tested positive but do not have symptoms or a fever

**Prevention Strategies after returning to work or school:**

- CDC recommends those recovering from Covid OR other Respiratory Illnesses take these additional precautions:
  - wearing a well-fitting mask for 5 days recommended
  - washings your hands frequently
  - limiting close contact with others
  - improving ventilation in their spaces
  - Physical distancing as much as possible. There is no single # that defines a “Safe” distance since the spread of viruses can depend on many factors

**CDC recommends that all people use core prevention strategies for all respiratory viruses including Covid, Flu, and RSV. Here are important steps you can take to protect yourself and others**

1. Stay up to date with immunizations including Covid, Flu, and RSV

- For most people (ages 6 months and up), that means getting a current flu and COVID-19 vaccine.
- Adults aged 60 years and older should talk to their healthcare provider about whether an RSV vaccine is right for them.
- Infant RSV vaccine can be given to either the pregnant mother or the infant at age 6 months. The infant gains some immunity if the pregnant mother gets vaccinated.

2. Hygiene

- Handwashing is the number one preventative measure to reduce the spread of disease. Do it frequently and avoid touching your eyes nose and mouth unless you have washed your hands
- Respiratory Hygiene and etiquette such as Coughing into a Kleenex or arm if no tissue is available, washing hands after contact with respiratory secretions both your own or others
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection regularly
- Personal protective equipment such as gloves and masks when anticipating contact with bodily fluids

3. Improve ventilation where you are if possible

- Moving indoor activities to outside
- Bringing in as much outdoor air as possible by opening windows
- Changing air filters frequently
- Turning on exhaust fans to improve airflow
- Using portable HEPA Cleaners (High Efficiency Particulate Air Filters)
- Turning your thermostat to the “ON” position instead of “AUTO” to ensure your HVAC system provides continuous airflow and filtration

4. Sanitation and disinfecting

- Frequently touched surfaces as often as possible