



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