
NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN)

ADVISORY

Updated guidance on discontinuation of transmission-based precautions for all persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19

May 6, 2020

NMDOH recommends that isolation can be discontinued when at least 10 days have passed since symptom onset for all persons with COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its COVID-19 guidance for return-to-work criteria for healthcare workers with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, as well as hospitalized patients and other high-risk groups with confirmed COVID-19. The duration of transmission-based precautions has been extended to at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, and there is no longer a preference for a particular strategy. Healthcare facilities should review their protocols and make revisions according to their resources and capacity.

For persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 and were symptomatic:

Symptom-based strategy

Exclude from work until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms; **AND**,
- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

Test-based strategy

Exclude from work until:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, **AND**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **AND**
- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).
- Note: There have been reports of prolonged detection of RNA without direct correlation to viral culture. The detection of viral RNA by PCR does not necessarily mean that infectious virus is present.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND RESPONSE

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For persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms:

Note: Symptoms cannot be used to determine where these individuals are in the course of their illness. While it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer than 10 days after their first positive test, the risk is presumed to be extremely low.

Time-based strategy

Exclude from work until:

- 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. If they develop symptoms, then the test-based or symptom-based strategy should be used.

Test-based strategy

Exclude from work until:

- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

For more information, consult the [CDC Criteria for Return To Work for Healthcare Personnel](#) and [CDC Guidance for Discontinuation of Transmission-based Precautions of Patients in Healthcare Settings](#).

Resources

- [NMDOH COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [CDC COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- **New Mexico Health Alert Network:** To register for the New Mexico Health Alert Network, go to <https://member.everbridge.net/index/453003085613008#/login> and click “Sign Up” at the bottom of the page. Provide all information on each screen, click on “Save and Continue,” and click on “Finish” at the end to begin receiving important health alerts and advisories.