



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment

Communicable Disease

How sick is too sick?

Public guidance document

This document outlines guidance for routine decisions about when children and staff should stay home from school or child care. There may be situations where public health determines more stringent return-to-school requirements.

There are four main reasons for children and adults to stay home:

1. The child or staff member could infect others with a contagious illness, either because of symptoms, a diagnosis, or recent exposure to a contagious illness.
2. The child or staff member does not feel well enough to take part in usual activities. For example, a child is overly tired, fussy, or will not stop crying.
3. A child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children.
4. The child or staff member has symptoms or an illness on this list, and staying home is required.

When to seek emergency medical attention

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

These are not all possible indications of a medical emergency. Call 9-1-1 or your health care provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

Revised September 2023

4300 Cherry Creek Drive S., Denver, CO 80246-1530 P 303-692-2000 www.colorado.gov/cdphe
Jared Polis, Governor | Jill Hunsaker Ryan, MPH, Executive Director



The contents of this document are not to be altered without the express permission of the Department.

Guidance for symptoms not due to a specific disease	Child or staff must stay home?
<p>Severe or new cough</p>	<p>Yes - Severe cough is often present in people with infectious respiratory illness. A person with severe, uncontrolled coughing, wheezing, or rapid or difficulty breathing (if new or worsening from baseline) should not attend school or child care and should talk to a health care provider.</p> <p>If all symptoms are consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the person is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>Students and staff may return to school following discussion with a health care provider, even if the cough is not fully resolved.</p>
<p>Diarrhea Frequent, loose, or watery stools (poop) compared to normal ones that are not caused by food or medicine</p>	<p>Yes - Unless the diarrhea is related to an existing chronic condition, is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home, or is consistent with the person's baseline.</p> <p>The child or staff member may return to school or child care 24 hours after their last episode of diarrhea unless the diarrhea is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the diarrhea is explained by a specific illness, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p>
<p>Fever Fever is a temperature of 100.4° F or greater. Babies who are 3 months or younger need to see a health care provider right away for a fever of 100° F or higher. Call your health care provider for any fever in an infant aged 6 months or younger.</p>	<p>Yes - The child or staff member may return to school or child care if the fever has been resolved for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications unless the fever is caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer.</p> <p>If the fever is consistent with the usual symptoms of a known chronic condition and the person is otherwise well enough to return to school, no further evaluation is necessary.</p> <p>A temporary, elevated temperature due to overexertion or overdress, without other symptoms of illness, should not be considered a fever.</p> <p>For more information about fever, read Children's Hospital Colorado's recommendations on fever care for children.</p>
<p>Flu-like symptoms Fever with sore throat or cough</p> <p>Other flu symptoms can include runny nose, congestion, fatigue, body aches, vomiting and diarrhea.</p>	<p>Yes - Children and staff may return to school or child care as long as they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms are improving, unless the symptoms are caused by an illness that requires them to stay home longer. If the symptoms can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>In consultation with a health care provider, additional evaluation for flu-like illnesses, sore throat, and upper respiratory symptoms may be appropriate, including evaluation for strep throat.</p>



Guidance for symptoms not due to a specific disease	Child or staff must stay home?
Vomiting	<p>Yes - Unless the vomiting is related to an existing chronic condition or is explained by a diagnosed condition not requiring the person to stay home. If the vomiting is unexplained and inconsistent with the person's baseline state of health, the child or staff member may return 24 hours after their last episode of vomiting. If the vomiting can be explained by a specific illness, then follow the exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If a child with a recent head injury vomits, seek medical attention.</p>



Guidance for specific diagnosed illnesses	Child or staff must stay home?
Chicken Pox	Yes - Exclude until the blisters have dried and crusted (usually 6 days), or in immunized people without crusting, until no new lesions within 24-hour period.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye) Pink color of eye and thick yellow/green discharge	No - Children and adults do not need to stay home unless they have a fever or are not able to participate in usual activities. Practice good hand hygiene.
COVID-19 (clinical diagnosis, <u>symptoms</u> after known exposure without testing, or a positive diagnostic test)	<p>Yes - Children and staff who have suspected COVID-19 (have symptoms following a known exposure) or who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 must be excluded and follow CDC's <u>isolation guidance</u>.</p> <p>If a COVID-19 test is negative and the symptoms are explained by a specific illness other than COVID-19, then the child or staff can return to school or child care following exclusion guidelines for that illness.</p> <p>If the COVID-19 test is negative and the illness is not explained by a new illness or a known chronic condition, the person may return to school as long as all symptoms are improving and fever, diarrhea, and vomiting have been fully resolved for 24 hours.</p>
Fifth's Disease (parvovirus)	No - The illness is no longer contagious once the rash appears.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie virus)	No - Exclusion is not necessary unless the child or adult meets other exclusion criteria, is drooling uncontrollably, and has mouth sores or is not able to take part in usual activities.
Head Lice or Scabies	Yes - Children and staff may stay at school or child care until the end of the day, but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment.
Hepatitis A, Salmonella, Shigella, or Shiga Toxin-Producing E. coli	Yes - Children and staff may return to school or child care when cleared by the health department.
Herpes	No - Exclusion is not necessary unless there are open sores that cannot be covered or there is uncontrollable drooling.
Impetigo	Yes - Children and adults need to stay home until 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has started.
Influenza	Yes - Children and staff should stay home until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have been improving for 24 hours.



Guidance for specific diagnosed illnesses	Child or staff must stay home?
Norovirus	Yes - Exclude children and staff for at least 48 hours after their last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea. During an outbreak, exclusion may be increased to 72 hours after the last episode of vomiting and/or diarrhea.
Ringworm	Yes - Children may stay at school or child care until the end of the day, but cannot return until after they have had the first treatment. Keep the area covered for the first three days if participating in activities with person to person contact.
Roseola	No - Exclusion is not necessary unless there is a fever or behavior changes.
Croup, RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)	Yes - Children and staff should remain out of school or child care until they are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have been improving for 24 hours. During an outbreak or when case rates are high, exclusion times may be increased to protect hospital capacity.
Strep Throat	Yes - Exclude for 12 hours after starting antibiotics.
Other vaccine-preventable diseases Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Yes - Children and staff can return to school once they are no longer contagious (see Infectious Disease Guidelines). Public health consultation may be necessary.
Yeast infections Thrush or Candida diaper rash	No - Follow good hand washing and hygiene practices.
Other Symptoms or illnesses not listed	Contact the child care center director or school health staff to see if the child or staff member needs to stay home (see Infectious Disease Guidelines). Public health consultation may be necessary.

This document was developed in collaboration with pediatricians, medical epidemiologists and public health professionals. The information presented is intended for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of your personal doctor's advice and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. The information should not be used in place of a visit, call or consultation or advice of your doctor or other health care provider.

References

American Academy of Pediatrics. *Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools: A Quick Reference Guide*. Aronson SS, Shope TR, eds. 5th ed. Itasca, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2020.20.
 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. *Infectious Diseases In Child Care and School Settings: Guidelines for Child Care Providers and Health Consultants, School Nurses and Other Personnel*. 2022.
 Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. COVID-19 Resources. <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>. September 2023.





COVID-19

COVID-19 Home

Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19

Updated May 11, 2023

If you were exposed to COVID-19, you should start taking precautions.



Isolation and Exposure Calculator

A tool to help you determine if you need to isolate or take other steps to prevent spreading COVID-19.

Isolation & Exposure

If you have COVID-19, you can spread the virus to others. There are precautions you can take to prevent spreading it to others: isolation, masking, and avoiding contact with people who are at high risk of getting very sick. Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19.

These recommendations do not change based on COVID-19 hospital admission levels. If you have COVID-19, also see additional information on treatments that may be available to you.

This information is intended for a general audience. Healthcare professionals should see Ending Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19. This CDC guidance is meant to supplement—not replace—any federal, state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations.

 **For Healthcare Professionals:** Ending Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19



When to Isolate

Regardless of vaccination status, **you should isolate from others when you have COVID-19.**

You should also isolate **if you are sick and suspect that you have COVID-19 but do not yet have test results.** If your results are positive, follow the full isolation recommendations below. If your results are negative, you can end your isolation.



IF YOU TEST

Negative

You can end your isolation



IF YOU TEST

Positive

Follow the full isolation recommendations below

When you have COVID-19, isolation is counted in days, as follows:

If you had no symptoms

- **Day 0 is the day you were tested** (not the day you received your positive test result)
- **Day 1 is the first full day** following the day you were tested
- If you develop symptoms within 10 days of when you were tested, the **clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset**

If you had symptoms

- **Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset**, regardless of when you tested positive
- **Day 1 is the first full day** after the day your symptoms started



Isolation

If you test positive for COVID-19, **stay home for at least 5 days and isolate from others in your home.**

You are **likely most infectious during these first 5 days.**

- **Wear a high-quality mask** if you must be around others at home and in public.
- **Do not go places** where you are unable to wear a mask. For travel guidance, see CDC's Travel webpage.
- Do not travel.
- **Stay home and separate from others** as much as possible.
- **Use a separate bathroom**, if possible.
- **Take steps to improve ventilation** at home, if possible.
- **Don't share personal household items**, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- **Monitor your symptoms.** If you have an emergency warning sign (like trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- **Learn more about what to do** if you have COVID-19.



Ending Isolation

End isolation based on how serious your COVID-19 symptoms were. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

If you had no symptoms

You may end isolation after day 5.

If you had symptoms and:

Your symptoms are improving

You may end isolation after day 5 if:

- You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

Your symptoms are not improving

Continue to isolate until:

- You are fever-free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medication).
- Your symptoms are improving.¹

If you had symptoms and had:

Moderate illness (you experienced shortness of breath or had difficulty breathing)

You need to isolate through day 10.

Severe illness (you were hospitalized) or have a weakened immune system

- You need to isolate through day 10.
- Consult your doctor before ending isolation.
- Ending isolation without a viral test may not be an option for you.

If you are unsure if your symptoms are moderate or severe or if you have a weakened immune system, talk to a healthcare provider for further guidance.

Regardless of when you end isolation

Until at least day 11:

- Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19.
- Remember to wear a high-quality mask when indoors around others at home and in public.
- Do not go places where you are unable to wear a mask until you are able to discontinue masking (see below).
- For travel guidance, see CDC's Travel webpage.



Removing Your Mask

After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving),

- Wear your mask through day 10.

OR

- If you have access to antigen tests, you should consider using them. With two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, you may remove your mask sooner than day 10.

Note: If your antigen test results¹ are positive, you may still be infectious. You should continue wearing a mask and wait at least 48 hours before taking another test. Continue taking antigen tests at least 48 hours apart until you have two sequential negative results. This may mean you need to continue wearing a mask and testing beyond day 10.

After you have ended isolation, if your COVID-19 symptoms recur or worsen, restart your isolation at day 0. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions about your symptoms or when to end isolation.

¹As noted in the Food and Drug Administration labeling for authorized over-the-counter antigen tests, negative test results do not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should not be used as the sole basis for treatment or patient management decisions, including infection control decisions.

Last Updated May 11, 2023

Source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases