

DPHHS HAN

Information Sheet



DATE

December 3, 2020

SUBJECT

Updated Guidance for Quarantine of COVID-19 Contacts and COVID Reinfections

BACKGROUND

Montana continues to see increases in cases of COVID-19.

- To date, over 65,000 cases of COVID-19 and 722 COVID-related deaths have been reported in Montana.
- CDC regularly updates COVID-19 investigation and contact tracing guidance.

INFORMATION

The situation is ongoing and additional guidance will be provided as it is received from CDC. Complete guidance can be viewed on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Healthcare Providers

As COVID-19 cases continue to surge in Montana, many local health departments charged with conducting case and contact investigations are being overwhelmed by their workloads. Montana DPHHS would like to encourage the provider community to help share information about isolation and quarantine recommendations with cases that they encounter.

Reduced Quarantine for COVID-19 Contacts

On December 2, 2020, CDC issued new guidance entitled, "Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing". Montana DPHHS recommends that local health jurisdictions and providers begin using this guidance at the time of this HAN. CDC continues to recommend a quarantine period of 14 days, but this guidance provides options to shorten the length of quarantine for contacts of COVID-19 cases. The guidance defines Day 0 as the last date of exposure to the COVID case. The complete updated guidance is available at [CDC's website](#), and key points are summarized here:

1. Quarantine for close contacts can end after Day 10 without testing **and** if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
2. Quarantine for close contacts can end after Day 7 if the person tests negative (by PCR or antigen test) on Day 5 or later, **and** if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring. **Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.**
3. After release from quarantine, individuals should continue to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 illness through Day 14, and adhere to all recommended interventions, including: correct and consistent mask use, social distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds, ensuring adequate indoor ventilation.
 - a. They should be advised that if any symptoms develop, they should immediately self-isolate and contact the local public health authority or their healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status and to assess for testing.
4. Persons can continue to be quarantined for 14 days without testing per existing recommendations. This option maximally reduces risk of transmission.
5. Unless regulated by another agency, facilities (e.g., skilled nursing and assisted living facilities) can choose to continue with the full 14 day quarantine of close contacts.

Montana DPHHS continues to recommend that close contacts be tested at entry to quarantine to identify infected persons without symptoms for contact tracing efforts.

The recommendation of a 10 day isolation for cases of COVID-19 (or 20 days for some severely ill individuals) remains unchanged. Complete isolation guidance is available at CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

The recommendation to end an outbreak of COVID-19 at a skilled nursing or assisted living facility after 14 days without a new case remains unchanged.

Healthcare infection prevention and control guidance for COVID remains unchanged at this time.

COVID-19 Reinfections

Based on CDC guidance, Montana DPHHS considers a COVID reinfection as a person with detected SARS-CoV-2 RNA ≥ 90 days since first lab-confirmed COVID infection, and new onset of COVID-compatible symptoms. Full reinfection considerations guidance is available on CDC's website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/reinfection.html>

For persons who have a positive test and develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by a provider, the provider may treat the patient clinically for COVID infection, but this case would not be counted as a reinfection by public health.

As a reminder, people who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>