

NEWS BRIEF

CDC Drops 5-day Isolation Guidance for COVID-19



On March 1, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released new guidance for individuals who test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). For the first time since 2021, the agency is loosening its COVID-19 isolation guidance to better reflect the evolving risk environment of the virus as hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19 drop.

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 no longer need to stay home from work and school for five days. Isolation is no longer necessary if the individual has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the aid of medication and overall symptoms are improving. Once people resume normal activities, they are encouraged to take preventive measures—such as washing their hands often and cleaning frequently touched surfaces—for the next five days to curb the spread of disease.

“Our goal here is to protect those at risk for severe illness while also reassuring folks that these recommendations are simple, clear, easy-to-understand and can be followed.”

- CDC Director Mandy Cohen

The CDC further noted that this change streamlines its guidance for respiratory viruses. That means Americans can manage COVID-19 like they do for influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). While every respiratory virus is different, a common approach to limiting the spread of disease makes the CDC’s recommendations easier to follow and more likely to be adopted. Other countries, including Britain, Australia, France and Canada, have implemented similar guidance and found no significant change in the spread of COVID-19.

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The latest CDC guidance changes reflect the progress made in protecting Americans against severe illness from COVID-19. Regardless, the CDC offers the following tips for reducing the spread of COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated with the latest version of the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows and using air purifiers.

People at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19, such as those who are pregnant or have a weakened immune system, may need to take additional precautions. The CDC recommends that adults 65 and older get a COVID-19 booster shot this spring in anticipation of an uptick in the virus later this summer. Individuals should direct any vaccination questions or concerns to their primary care physicians.

We'll keep you apprised of any notable updates related to COVID-19.

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