

COVID-19

# Testing, Quarantine, *and* Return to Work Guidance

for Non-Healthcare Personnel



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## ***Guidance Purpose***

*To help inform employers and employees of COVID-19 protocols and help them make decisions regarding testing, quarantine/isolation, and “return to work” for NON healthcare personnel who fall into the categories listed below. There are three basic scenarios labeled 1, 2 and 3*

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***NOTE***

If assessing a healthcare worker, please review Healthcare Worker Return to Work Guidance  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-risk-assesment-hcp.html)

# 1. Test Positive for COVID-19

## Stay Home

Stay home except to get medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis. Ask friends or family members to do your shopping or use a grocery delivery service.

## Isolate

Isolation is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive. Isolation means you stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time to avoid spreading illness. As much as possible, stay in a specific room away from other people and use a separate bathroom if available.

## Return to Work *(see NOTE below)*

Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) recommends a time-based return to work strategy that is determined based on a person's health status and described in the bullet points below.

### Symptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after:

- At least 10 days<sup>‡</sup> have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, SOB, fatigue, muscle aches/body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, new loss of taste or smell) which may exceed the 10 days<sup>‡</sup> since symptoms first appeared.



### Asymptomatic persons with confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after:

- At least 10 days<sup>‡</sup> have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person remains asymptomatic.
- Asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above.

**NOTE:** Please also read “Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions” and “Time-based Strategy for Returning to Work” on page 7.

## 2. Suspected COVID-19 and/or Exposure Without Use of Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

This is someone who thinks they may have COVID-19 (e.g., developed symptoms of a respiratory infection [e.g., cough, shortness of breath, fever]) but has not been tested for COVID-19 and/or someone who has been exposed to a person with COVID-19 or lives in an area with local or widespread transmission.

### Contact Your Healthcare Provider

If you were exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and/or you have symptoms, you might have COVID-19. Contact your healthcare provider for a COVID-19 test. The best time for COVID-19 testing is 5-7 days after exposure. If you suspect you have a COVID-19 infection, because you have symptoms, you should be tested right away and isolate away from others.

### Stay Home

Stay home except to get medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis. Ask friends or family members to do your shopping or use a grocery delivery service.

### Quarantine

Quarantine is the 14-day period of time from when you were possibly exposed to a COVID positive person and you might develop infection. If you test positive for COVID-19 or develop symptoms anytime during the 14-day watch period, you will need to isolate and follow the instructions for isolation above in scenario (1) Testing Positive for COVID-19. If you test negative during the 14-day quarantine, you must remain in quarantine until the end of your 14th\* day. If you feel well and have not tested positive for COVID-19 by the end of your 14th day, your quarantine period is over.

The 14 days of quarantine is still recommended as the best option. The CDC and Washington DOH have presented acceptable alternatives in some instances to shorten quarantine to balance the personal burden against a small possibility of increased risk of spread.

- Quarantine may end after Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been observed during daily monitoring. Additional criteria should also be met:
  - Daily symptom self-monitoring continues through quarantine Day 14; and,
  - The individual strictly adheres to masking and physical distancing through quarantine Day 14. If any symptoms develop immediately self-isolate.
  - Testing on or around Day 10 is recommended
- Spokane Regional Health District is not recommending the reduced quarantine option of seven days with a



negative test due to very high incidence rates currently in the community. Guidance will be reviewed every two weeks.

- The Center for Disease Control and Washington State Department of Health state that a fully vaccinated person with an exposure to someone with COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all the following criteria:
  - Fully vaccinated (two weeks after second dose of a 2-dose series, such as Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, OR two weeks after receiving a single-dose vaccine, such as the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) and
  - Have not had symptoms since current COVID-19 exposure.

Fully vaccinated persons who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 should get tested five days after exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until receiving a negative test result. Individuals who receive a positive test result should isolate for 10 days. Persons who are continuously exposed to COVID-19 at home or work should test again on day 10 and again every five days until five days have passed since they were last exposed.

## Return to Work *(see NOTE on page 4)*

Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) recommends a time-based return to work strategy that is determined based on a person's health status. If you have been sick but were not tested for COVID-19 or your test results are negative, you can return to work if you follow the guidelines below.

### Symptomatic persons suspected COVID-19 can return to work after:

- At least 10 days‡ have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) which may exceed the 10 days‡ since symptoms first appeared.

### Asymptomatic persons with a known exposure to a person with COVID-19

- These persons should neither work in critical infrastructure nor be healthcare workers.
- These persons should not return to work and should self-quarantine for a period of 14 days.\*
- Of note, if a person is tested for COVID-19 during the 14-day quarantine period, a negative test result would not change or decrease the time a person is monitored.

- Asymptomatic persons may return to work after Day 10 of quarantine, as described above in Scenario 2, Section 3-Quarantine.

### Asymptomatic persons who are not healthcare personnel, but work in critical infrastructure, and who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19

- These persons are recommended to self-quarantine for 14 days\* unless a replacement cannot be found. If this is not possible, the individual and employer should follow the CDC guidance for return to work: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/critical-workers/implementing-safety-practices.html)
- Of note, if a person is tested for COVID-19 during the 14-day\* quarantine period, a negative test result would not change or decrease the time a person is monitored.
- Asymptomatic persons may return to work after Day 10 of quarantine, as described above in Scenario 2, Section 3-Quarantine.

*\*NOTE: When 14 days is too burdensome, 10 days‡ can be an option if people are asymptomatic, able to mask/distance and symptom monitor through day 14.*

*‡NOTE: 14 days is still required for healthcare workers, congregate living situations such as shelters, inpatient rehab, and long term care.*

**NOTE:** Please also read "Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions" and "Time-based Strategy for Returning to Work" on p. 8.

# 3. Immediate Household Member Exposure to a COVID-19 Positive Case

This is someone who has an immediate family or household member who suspects they may have COVID-19 (e.g., developed symptoms of a respiratory infection [e.g., cough, shortness of breath, fever]) but has not been tested for COVID-19.

## Contact Your Healthcare Provider

If your child or adult family/household members were exposed to someone who tested positive for COVID-19 and they have COVID-19 symptoms, contact your healthcare provider for a COVID-19 test. The best time for COVID-19 testing is 5-7 days after exposure. If you suspect you have a COVID-19 infection, you should be tested right away and isolate away from others.

## Household Members: Stay Home and Isolate

### Child(ren)

One adult should plan to be the primary caregiver, isolate within the home, and stay with the child(ren), except to get medical care.

### Adult(s)

Adults should stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended time to avoid spreading illness. As much as possible, stay in a specific room away from other people and use a separate bathroom if available.

## Exposed Member: Quarantine *(see Quarantine, p. 5)*

## Return to Work *(see NOTE below)*

Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) recommends a time-based return to work strategy that is determined based on a person's health status and described in the bullet points at right.



- If your family member tests negative for COVID-19, you are free to return to work but continue to monitor yourself and your family for symptoms. If you develop symptoms, please follow the instructions in scenario (2) *Suspected COVID-19 or Exposure Without Use of Proper PPE* above.
- If a child tests positive for COVID-19, the designated primary caregiver and child will need to isolate for the recommended time to avoid spreading illness. Other household members will need to follow the instructions in scenario (2) *Suspected COVID-19 or Exposure* on p. 5.
- If household adults test positive for COVID-19, they will need to isolate away from the rest of the family and follow the instructions in scenario (1) *Test Positive for COVID-19* on p. 4.

# Return to Work Practices and Work Restrictions

Persons who are not healthcare personnel who complete the above conditions can return to work while observing the following actions:

- Wear a face covering if physical distancing cannot be maintained in the workplace, per current CDC guidelines:  
[cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html).
  - Cloth face coverings are appropriate for persons who are not healthcare personnel and are recommended by CDC to help prevent asymptomatic spread of COVID-19 in settings where physical distancing cannot be practiced.
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette in CDC's interim infection control guidance (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
- Self-monitor for symptoms and seek re-evaluation from occupational health if symptoms recur or worsen.

CDC guidance for discontinuation of home isolation for persons with COVID-19 infection not in a healthcare setting can be used in conjunction with this guidance for returning to work and can be found at: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html).

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# Time-Based Strategy for Returning to Work

The above recommendations associated with Returning to Work and resuming routine activities are based on a time-based strategy as described in each scenario. Time-based means the science supports a person no longer being able to spread illness to others after certain time intervals have passed. It is the primary strategy recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for guidance on safely returning to work.

**SRHD DOES NOT RECOMMEND** using a test-based strategy for returning to work (2 negative tests at least 24 hours apart) after COVID-19 infection. Persons may continue to have a positive PCR test result for weeks or months after they recover. PCR positive specimens capable of producing disease have not been isolated more than 9 days after onset of illness.

More information about the science behind the symptom-based return to work can be found at: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html).



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