

County of Santa Clara

Public Health Department

Public Health Administration
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January 18, 2024

Dear Partners in Congregate Care Settings (LTCFs, Jails, Shelters),

Thank you for your continued care and support for the most vulnerable residents in our community. As immunity to and impacts of the COVID-19 virus on the general population have evolved, public health policies and priorities for intervention are now focused on protecting those most at risk for serious illness.

On January 9, 2024, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued [new isolation and quarantine recommendations for the general public](#) to minimize the disruptive impact of absenteeism due to COVID-19 in schools and workplaces. Aligning with common practice for other respiratory viruses, such as influenza or RSV, the revised guidance allows individuals infected with COVID-19 to end isolation after 24 hours fever-free and improvement in other symptoms. Because they may continue to be infectious for 10 days after they become sick or test positive, CDPH also recommends that, during their infectious period, individuals infected with COVID-19 should continue to mask when around others indoors and avoid contact with people at higher risk for severe COVID-19 including those who live in congregate care facilities.

Although CDPH's recommendations for the general public are evolving to treat COVID-19 like other respiratory viruses, the elderly, immunocompromised individuals, and those with co-morbid conditions who live in congregate care facilities continue to be at increased risk for severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to COVID-19. COVID-19 continues to have a significantly higher hospitalization and mortality rate than other respiratory viruses, and like other communicable diseases, COVID-19 has greater propensity for spread in congregate care settings than in individual homes, schools, and other workplaces.

Consistent with the updated guidance from CDPH, the County of Santa Clara, Public Health Department is issuing the following recommendations for LTCFs, shelters, and jails:

SNFs and Other Congregate Settings *that Provide Healthcare*

1. Isolation and quarantine of COVID-19 infected and exposed Health Care Personnel (HCP)
 - Continue to follow CDPH guidance for [isolation and quarantine](#) requirements for HCP.
 - Continue to follow current [CDC guidance](#) for testing of HCP.
 - Following an exposure, HCP should have a series of three viral tests that will typically be at day 1 (where day of exposure is day 0), day 3, and day 5.

Board of Supervisors: Sylvia Arenas, Cindy Chavez, Otto Lee, Susan Ellenberg, S. Joseph Simitian
County Executive: James R. Williams

- First Test: For symptomatic individuals the first test should be conducted immediately. For asymptomatic individuals it should be conducted as soon as possible but no earlier than 24 hours after the exposure.
 - Second Test: If the first test is negative, the second test should be conducted 48 hours after the first negative test.
 - Third Test: If the second test is negative, the third test should be conducted 48 hours after the second negative test.
2. Isolation of COVID-19 positive residents
- Continue to follow current [CDC guidance](#). COVID-19 positive **symptomatic** residents who are not moderately or severely immunocompromised should remain in isolation until the following criteria are met:
 - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared;
 - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; and
 - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
 - Individuals who are moderately or severely immunocompromised may require [longer periods of isolation](#).
 - COVID-19 positive **asymptomatic** residents should remain in isolation for 10 days from the date the first positive COVID-19 test was collected.
 - Facilities should rapidly link COVID-19 positive residents to [recommended treatment options](#).
3. Isolation and testing of COVID-19 exposed symptomatic residents (generally, roommates of COVID-19 positive residents)
- Exposed symptomatic residents should isolate and be tested immediately, and again on Day 1 or Day 2 if initially negative. If testing is positive, follow isolation recommendations for COVID-19 positive residents. If testing remains negative, residents should remain isolated until at least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, symptoms have improved, AND a negative test result is obtained on Day 5 post exposure.
 - Exposed symptomatic residents should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days from date of last exposure.
4. Quarantine and testing of COVID-19 exposed asymptomatic residents (generally, roommates of COVID-19 positive residents)
- Exposed asymptomatic residents should quarantine (away from the COVID-19 positive case; alone or with other COVID-19 exposed residents) and be tested immediately, again on Day 3, and again on Day 5 post-exposure. Residents may be released from quarantine if they do not develop symptoms and test negative on Day 5 or later. Residents who choose not to test should remain quarantined for 10 days.
 - Exposed asymptomatic residents should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days from date of last exposure.

5. Testing of HCP and residents when there are 3 or more cases in the facility amongst HCP or residents
 - Continue to follow [CDC guidance](#) which recommends that all potentially affected individuals (e.g., on the same unit, floor, or entire facility) undergo a series of three tests, spaced 48 hours apart, which will typically be on Days 1, 3 and 5 after exposure.
 - Testing should continue on affected unit(s) or facility-wide every 3-7 days until there are no new cases for 14 days.

Congregate Settings *that Do Not Provide Healthcare*

1. Isolation of COVID-19 positive staff and residents
 - COVID-19 positive **symptomatic** staff and residents should remain in isolation until all of the following criteria are met:
 - At least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
 - At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
 - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
 - COVID-19 positive **asymptomatic** staff and residents should remain in isolation for 5 days from the date the first positive COVID-19 test was collected.
 - All COVID-19 positive staff and residents should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days from date of symptom onset (or first positive test if asymptomatic).
2. Isolation and testing of exposed symptomatic staff and residents
 - Exposed symptomatic staff and symptomatic residents should isolate and be tested immediately, and again on Day 1 or Day 2 if initially negative. If testing is positive, follow isolation recommendations for COVID-19 positive staff and residents. If testing remains negative, the individual should remain isolated until at least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms have improved. Thereafter, staff and residents no longer need to isolate but should conduct an additional test sometime between Day 3-5 post exposure.
 - Exposed symptomatic staff and residents should continue to wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days from date of last exposure.
3. Quarantine and testing of exposed asymptomatic staff and residents
 - Exposed asymptomatic staff and residents do not need to quarantine but should test within 3 to 5 days of exposure. If testing is positive, follow isolation recommendations for COVID-19 positive staff and residents.
 - Exposed asymptomatic staff and residents should wear a well-fitting mask around others for a total of 10 days from date of last exposure.
4. Testing of staff and residents when there are 3 or more cases in the facility amongst staff or residents
 - The Public Health Department recommends that all potentially exposed individuals (e.g. on the same unit, floor, or entire facility) undergo a series of three tests, spaced 48 hours

apart, which will typically be on Days 1, 3 and 5 after exposure.

- Testing should continue on affected unit(s) or facility-wide every 3-7 days until there are no new cases for 14 days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sarah L. Rudman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Sarah L. Rudman, MD MPH
Deputy Public Health Officer
Director, Infectious Disease and Response Branch