



RECOMMENDED MINIMUM QUARANTINE TIMEFRAMES

Updated: December 15, 2021

Note: This document applies only to non-healthcare settings. Refer to NJDOH's [COVID-19 webpage for healthcare professionals](#) for quarantine information in healthcare settings.

Background

The incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 is between 2-14 days. CDC and NJDOH continue to recommend a 14-day quarantine period for persons who have been in close contact (within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone who has COVID-19, unless they are fully vaccinated¹ or recently recovered from COVID-19.

Quarantine exceptions

1. Fully vaccinated individuals do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have [symptoms](#). However, they should get tested 5-7 days after their exposure, wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative, and get tested and isolate immediately if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days **and** have subsequently recovered **and** remain asymptomatic do NOT need to quarantine. However, they should wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days after exposure, self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, isolate immediately if symptoms develop, and consult with a healthcare professional for testing recommendations.

The 14-day quarantine period for unvaccinated individuals is based on estimates of the upper bounds of the COVID-19 incubation period. Effective quarantine is a critical measure to control disease transmission and is intended to reduce the risk that infected persons might unknowingly transmit infection to others. For some individuals, however, a 14-day quarantine may impose significant hardship, pose burdens on public health systems and communities, dissuade persons diagnosed with COVID-19 from naming contacts, and dissuade contacts from responding to contact tracer outreach. A 14-day quarantine may also result in non-compliance with quarantine of any length.

Quarantine Timeframes

While a 14-day quarantine period is optimal, NJDOH considers the CDC options to shorten quarantine to be acceptable alternatives in most community settings (*refer to High Risk Congregate Care Settings for*

¹ Fully vaccinated is defined as ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2- dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

exceptions). Persons who have close contact with someone with COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status should be tested 5-7 days after the last exposure (unless recently recovered as defined above).

Options for shortening quarantine only apply if no COVID-19 symptoms develop during the quarantine period. If symptoms develop, the individual should immediately self-isolate, contact a healthcare provider and/or the [local health department](#), and be tested for COVID-19. Additionally, individuals should continue to self-monitor for symptoms for the full 14-days. *Note: Depending on local conditions and capacities, community settings/facilities may choose to continue implementing a 14-day quarantine duration.*

Acceptable options to shorten quarantine include:

1. **7-Day quarantine with testing.** Unvaccinated persons can end quarantine after Day 7 after receiving a negative COVID-19 test result collected between Day 5 and Day 7. Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7.
2. **10-Day quarantine without testing.** Unvaccinated persons can end quarantine after Day 10 if they haven't been tested for COVID-19.

Quarantine exceptions

1. Fully vaccinated individuals do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have [symptoms](#). However, they should get tested 5-7 days after their exposure, wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative, and get tested and isolate immediately if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
2. Individuals who tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days **and** have subsequently recovered **and** remain asymptomatic do NOT need to quarantine. However, they should wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days after exposure, self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, isolate immediately if symptoms develop, and consult with a healthcare professional for testing recommendations.

High-Risk Congregate Settings

High-risk congregate settings (non-healthcare) are settings with increased risk for exposure and disease transmission. (e.g., group homes, shelters, and correctional facilities).

Unvaccinated Residents/Staff

NJDOH continues to recommend a 14-day quarantine for unvaccinated residents and staff in these settings. If considering implementation of a shortened quarantine duration for unvaccinated residents or staff, high-risk congregate settings/facilities should first carefully weigh the risks and benefits of different quarantine scenarios and consider the following:

- Facility vaccination rate for staff and residents
- Level of community transmission
- Ability to maintain physical distancing
- Compliance with universal masking policies

- Ability to properly ventilate
- Proportion of staff and residents at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19
- Availability of resources for broad-based testing, daily symptom screening, and outbreak response.

After weighing the risks and benefits, if facilities choose to shorten quarantine for unvaccinated residents or staff, they must ensure compliance with other recommended prevention strategies during the full 14 days (e.g., symptom monitoring, mask wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, and proper ventilation) and immediate isolation/testing should symptoms develop.

Shortened quarantine timeframes are not acceptable during outbreaks in high-risk congregate settings.

Fully Vaccinated or Recently Recovered Residents/Staff

Fully vaccinated or recently recovered (as defined above) residents and staff in high-risk congregate settings who remain asymptomatic do not need to quarantine (*fully vaccinated individuals should be tested for COVID-19 5-7 days following last exposure*). However, they should wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days after exposure or receipt of a negative test result, self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, isolate immediately if symptoms develop, and be tested for COVID-19 (*fully vaccinated*) or consult with a healthcare professional for testing recommendations (*recently recovered*).

Quarantine After Travel

Non-essential travel should be deferred until persons are fully vaccinated. New Jersey residents traveling out of state or internationally should check travel advisories (including quarantine) at their destination location.

Domestic Travel

- Fully vaccinated or recently recovered travelers do not need to quarantine after travel but should self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate if symptoms develop.
- Travelers who are not fully vaccinated (*if travel cannot be deferred*) should get tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after travel and self-quarantine at home for 7 days, even with a negative test result. Unvaccinated individuals who do not get tested should stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

International Travel

- Fully vaccinated and recently recovered travelers do not need to quarantine after travel but should self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate if symptoms develop. Fully vaccinated travelers should get tested for COVID-19 3-5 days after international travel (*testing is not recommended for recently recovered travelers*).
- Travelers who are not fully vaccinated (*if travel cannot be deferred*) should get tested 3-5 days after international travel AND should self-quarantine for a full 7 days upon return even with a negative test result. Unvaccinated individuals who do not get tested should stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

- *Note: International travelers should refer to [CDC guidance](#) for additional requirements when arriving in the United States.*

References and Resources:

- [CDC Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing](#)
- [CDC Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)
- [CDC Quarantine and Isolation](#)
- [CDC Recommendations for Quarantine Duration in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [CDC Travel during COVID-19](#)
- [New Jersey COVID-19 Testing Site Finder](#)
- [NJDOH Communicable Disease Service Traveler's Health](#)
- [NJ Travel Advisory](#)