RECOMMENDED MINIMUM QUARANTINE TIMEFRAMES

Updated: April 5, 2021

Background:

The incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 is between 2-14 days (median incubation is about 5 days). It is for this reason that CDC and NJDOH continue to recommend a 14-day quarantine period. This quarantine period for persons who might have been exposed to COVID-19 has proven to be an effective strategy to prevent further transmission.

For some individuals, however, a 14-day quarantine may impose a significant economic or other hardship in some circumstances. This may dissuade individuals from responding to contact tracer outreach or result in non-compliance with quarantine of any length.

On 12/2/20, CDC released guidance with options to shorten the quarantine time period, which, while it risks being less effective than the currently recommended 14-day quarantine, it may reduce the burden and increase willingness to adhere to public health recommendations.

CDC recommends that persons who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months and those who are fully vaccinated (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) do NOT need to quarantine after having close contact with someone with COVID-19, as long as they remain asymptomatic (see exceptions for high-risk congregate care settings).

NEW! CDC has issued new travel guidance for persons who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months and those who are fully vaccinated. Testing and quarantine for these individuals is no longer recommended for domestic travel. International travel poses additional risks and even fully vaccinated travelers are at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading new COVID-19 variants. Testing before arrival into the U.S. is required (or documentation of recent recovery), and testing after arrival is recommended for fully vaccinated persons, but quarantine after arrival for these groups is no longer recommended. Pre- and post-travel testing and quarantine is still recommended for unvaccinated persons. CDC recommends travel be deferred until fully vaccinated.

The NJDOH COVID-19 Activity Level Index Report (CALI) provides information on COVID-19 transmission risk by region and statewide, and characterizes risk as Very High (red), High (orange), moderate (yellow), or low (green): https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/. The following minimum quarantine recommendations are based on the level of COVID-19 transmission.

NJDOH Recommendations:

High-Risk Congregate Care Settings: High-risk congregate care settings are those that care for persons at high risk for severe complications (e.g., long-term care and assisted living facilities, group homes, correctional facilities).

- **Residents** of high-risk congregate care settings need to continue to quarantine for 14-days, regardless of vaccination status and at all COVID-19 transmission risk levels, following prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19. Asymptomatic residents who have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the prior 3 months do NOT need to quarantine after a close contact exposure but IS recommended for a close contact exposure > 3 months from the prior infection.

- Persons **who work** in high-risk congregate settings need to continue to quarantine for 14-days, following prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 unless they remain asymptomatic AND:

    - Persons are fully vaccinated, OR
    - Persons have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months, OR
    - Staffing shortages would cause serious harm or danger to public health or safety (Refer to CDC *Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages*)[1].

  Testing following an exposure and through routine workplace screening programs (if present) is still recommended, even if fully vaccinated. Refer to NJDOH *Guidance for COVID-19 Diagnosed and/or Exposed Healthcare Personnel* for more information.

Community Settings and Individuals:

Outside of high-risk congregate settings, following prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with COVID-19, persons should quarantine UNLESS:

- Individuals are fully vaccinated , OR
- Individuals have clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months.

The recommended minimum timeframes for quarantine vary by the level of community transmission.

- When there is substantial COVID-19 community spread, defined as Very High (red) or High (orange) on the CALI report (by region), NJDOH recommends quarantine for 14 days *where feasible* to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 and particularly for persons who live with or care for persons at high risk of severe complications for COVID-19 (older adults, persons with underlying conditions or obesity, and pregnant women).

- When COVID-19 transmission risk is Moderate (yellow) or Low (green) on the CALI report (by region), while a 14-day quarantine is preferred, CDC's recommended shortened quarantine timeframes are acceptable alternatives.

[1] Refer to "Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination" for special considerations for immunocompromised persons.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html

Minimum Quarantine Timeframes by COVID-19 Regional Transmission Risk Level (CALI Score)[2]

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Very High Risk
14 days is always preferred as the best way to prevent COVID-19 transmission.			
10 days without testing OR 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days	10 days without testing OR 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days	14 days for group settings and organized activities 14 days for individuals unless it causes significant economic or other hardship **ONLY IF 14 days is not feasible**, follow 10 days without testing OR 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days	14 days for group settings and organized activities 14 days for individuals unless it causes significant economic or other hardship **ONLY IF 14 days is not feasible**, follow 10 days without testing OR 7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days

- *Community Settings & Organized Activities*: School and childcare administrators, employers, and individuals or entities having control over organized groups or activities (e.g., sports teams) should have a policy that defines quarantine timeframes for their population (staff, students, athletes, etc.)[3]. For organized activities that take place in different regions of the state (e.g., sports team), the "home region" risk level where the group is primarily located can be used.

- *Individuals*: It is preferred that individuals not working at or attending group activities quarantine for 14 days. This is the safest way to protect family, friends, and community members, particularly if individuals will be in contact with persons at high risk for severe COVID-19 illness or if the COVID-19 transmission risk is High or Very High (orange or red CALI score). If a 14-day quarantine would pose a significant economic or other hardship[4], if it will result in non-compliance with quarantine, or if the COVID-19 transmission risk is Moderate or Low (yellow or green CALI score), the CDC recommended shortened timeframes are acceptable. It is the individual's personal responsibility to determine if they can quarantine fork 14-days, but they should comply with the minimum alternative timeframes. *Note: individuals who work at or attend group activities in community settings should refer to those organization's policies.*

[2] Excludes high-risk congregate care settings (e.g., long-term care and assisted living facilities, group homes, correctional facilities)

[3] If the quarantine period started when COVID-19 transmission risk is High or Very High, the 14 days should be completed even if the transmission risk changes to Moderate or Low during those 14 days.

[4] Examples of significant hardship include loss of income; inability to obtain food, medication or other essential items; inability to provide family members with essential transportation or other care services.

Summary of Quarantine Timeframes if Identified as a Close Contact of Someone with COVID-19

- 14-day quarantine is preferred for all individuals and groups where feasible
- Acceptable Alternative Quarantine Timeframes (when COVID-19 transmission risk is Moderate or Low):
    - After Day 10 without testing and if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring, OR
    - After Day 7 if the individual tests negative with a viral test (molecular-PCR or antigen) between day 5-7 and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring.

      Note: The specimen must be collected between day 5-7 (not earlier than day 5), but quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. The person should remain in quarantine until the results are received and are negative. If test results are delayed, quarantine should be continued until after Day 10.

Travel:

CDC recommends travel 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.

Travel within the United States:

- People who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine OR who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months do not need to be tested for COVID-19 before or after travel to New Jersey and do not need to self-quarantine, but should self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate if symptoms develop.
- If travel cannot be deferred, unvaccinated travelers (including essential workers such as healthcare personnel) should continue to follow all New Jersey and CDC travel recommendations, including testing pre- and post-travel and quarantine.

International Travel:

- Fully vaccinated travelers and travelers who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the past 3 months do not need to quarantine after international travel, although they 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.

- If travel cannot be deferred, unvaccinated travelers (including essential workers such as healthcare personnel) should continue to follow all New Jersey and CDC travel recommendations, including testing pre- and post-travel and quarantine.

Summary of Quarantine Timeframes After Travel

Fully Vaccinated Travelers:

- International travel: Get tested 3-5 days after returning to the United States, but no quarantine needed
- For domestic travel, no quarantine or test before or after travel needed

Travelers who Clinically Recovered from COVID-19 in past 3 months:

- No quarantine or pre- or post-travel test needed

Unvaccinated Travelers:

- Defer travel until fully vaccinated
- Before travel, get tested with a viral test 1-3 days before the trip
- Get tested 3-5 days after travel
- Stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if the post-travel test is negative. If not tested after travel, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel.

CDC Travel Recommendations:

CDC Domestic Travel during COVID-19:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html;
International Travel during COVID-19:
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/international-travel-during-covid19.html

NJ Travel Advisory: https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey

Additional considerations:

- Quarantine can be shortened only **if persons remain asymptomatic** throughout the shortened quarantine period; if they **continue to monitor for symptoms** through Day 14; and if they are counseled to follow COVID-19 prevention recommendations (e.g., social distancing, mask use, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, avoiding crowds) through Day 14.

- Persons under quarantine should be advised that if they develop symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately self-isolate and contact the local health department (LHD) www.localhealth.nj.gov and their healthcare provider to report this change in clinical status.

- If an outbreak is reported in a community setting, contacts must quarantine for the full 14 days.

- Clinically Recovered from COVID-19 within 3 months: Persons who tested positive for COVID-19 (viral test) and who clinically recovered from COVID-19 in the previous 3 months do not need to quarantine. However, persons who clinically recovered from COVID-19 greater than 3 months ago (and who are not fully vaccinated) should follow quarantine recommendations for unvaccinated persons.

- Fully Vaccinated Persons: Fully vaccinated persons do not need to quarantine as long as they remain asymptomatic. Although the risk that fully vaccinated people could become infected with COVID-19 is low, if symptoms develop, they should isolate and seek medical evaluation for COVID-19, which may include testing. Fully vaccinated means ≥2 weeks after receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or ≥2 weeks after receipt of a single-dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson [J&J]/Janssen).

References and Resources:

- CDC Options to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with SARS-CoV-2 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing, 12/2/20: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html
- CDC Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html
- Updated Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations in Response to COVID-19 Vaccination https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-after-vaccination.html
- CDC Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/mitigating-staff-shortages.html
- CDC Travel during COVID-19: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-during-covid19.html
- New Jersey COVID-19 Testing Site Finder: https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/testing#test-sites
- NJDOH COVD-19 Activity Level Index Report (CALI Report): https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/
- NJDOH Guidance for COVID-19 Diagnosed and/or Exposed Healthcare Personnel: https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/Guidance_for_COVID19_Diagnosed_and or_Exposed_HCP.pdf
- NJ Travel Advisory: https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey