



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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To: Community Partner/Employer/Business Owner
From: Central Michigan District Health Department
Date: November 16, 2020
RE: Isolation/Quarantine Letters

Due to overwhelming caseloads, **the health department will no longer provide documentation clearing individuals from COVID-19 related quarantine and isolation.** You can determine when your employees are safely able to return to work by the following guidance:

When to end quarantine¹:

- 14 days **after** the last contact with a person who is contagious with COVID-19.
 - For explanations of several scenarios with illustrations of how to calculate the days, see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>

When to end isolation¹:

- **If symptoms were present and they think or know they had COVID-19:**
 - Can return to normal activities when it has been:
 - At least 10 days² since symptoms first appeared **and**
 - At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation)
- **If they tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms:**
 - Can return to normal activities when it has been:
 - 10 days since the date the positive test was performed
 - If symptoms develop after test date, then follow the guidance above for “If symptoms were present...”

NOTE: You SHOULD NOT REQUIRE a negative COVID-19 test to discontinue isolation. The PCR test for COVID-19 can be falsely positive for 12 or more weeks after illness. Other than those listed in footnote #2 below, people aren't able to infect others past 10 days from when their symptoms started. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html> for further discussion and references.

¹ *Quarantine* keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus away from others. *Isolation* keeps someone who is infected with the virus away from others, even in their home.

² 20 days from onset of symptoms are recommended for those that were sick enough to be in the ICU or intubated, or are severely immunocompromised (which is anyone on chemotherapy, within one year of a stem cell transplant or organ transplant, have untreated HIV, are taking 20mg or more of prednisone for 14 days or longer). Have your employee consult with their healthcare provider as needed.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause you. Please keep in mind that answers to many questions can be found on our COVID-19 website: <https://www.cmdhd.org/novel-coronavirus>. In addition, both the state of Michigan and MIOSHA have created guidance for many sectors of business. Find more information [here](#). Lastly, we have included some of the most common “frequently asked questions” below. Contact our COVID Message Center at 989-773-5921 extension 1444 if you have additional questions after reviewing the resources mentioned here.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: If my employee was exposed to COVID-19 but has a positive antibody test, do they still need to quarantine?

A: Yes. We still do not know how much protection the antibodies might provide or how long this protection might last. Also, there is a chance the positive result is due to antibodies from an infection with a virus from the same family of viruses (called coronaviruses), such as the one that causes the common cold. In other words, it could be a false positive for COVID-19.

Q: If my employee was exposed to COVID-19 and tests negative by PCR or antigen testing, can they get out of quarantine early?

A: No. It can take up to 14 days after exposure to the virus for a person to develop COVID-19 symptoms. A negative result before end of the 14-day quarantine period does not rule out possible infection. They may test negative if the sample was collected early in the infection and test positive later during the illness

Q: My employee is a critical/essential worker. They don't have to quarantine, right?

A: Michigan Public Act No. 238, effective October 22, 2020, requires all employees to isolate and quarantine per the guidance above. The only groups that are not mandated to quarantine in Michigan are: health care professionals; workers at a health care facility; first responders; child protective service employees; worker at a child caring institution; workers at an adult foster care facility, and; workers at a correctional facility.

Q: My employee was diagnosed with COVID-19 before and just got exposed to someone with COVID-19. Do they have to quarantine?

A: People who have tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to quarantine or get tested again for up to 3 months as long as they do not develop symptoms again. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 should follow up with their health care provider to decide if they need to be tested.