



New Jersey Department of Health
Guidance for Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Home Isolation for
Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19
MARCH 2020

Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions for Patients with Confirmed COVID-19 Infection:

This guidance is provided to assist healthcare facilities, healthcare providers and local public health officials in determining when to discontinue isolation for patients with confirmed COVID-19. Confirmed cases of COVID-19 are those patients who have tested positive after undergoing appropriate testing through the NJDOH or other available means of testing. Confirmed cases who do not require a higher level of care or who are improved enough to be discharged will be asked to remain on home isolation. Guidance for discontinuation of home isolation is provided below. COVID-19 patients who remain hospitalized for an extended period may remain on inpatient isolation until they have met criteria below. Please note this is a rapidly evolving situation and as more data become available this guidance may change. Facilities currently caring for patients with COVID-19 may choose to develop additional internal guidance for their staff and patients.

Repeated Testing for Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions

The need for additional sequential testing should be made based on the needs of the facility, the acuity of the patient, and the potential exposure to highly vulnerable populations. Current guidance maintains the need for resolution of fever and improvement of symptoms even with negative specimens¹. In persons with a persistent productive cough, SARS-CoV-2-RNA might be detected for longer periods in sputum specimens than in upper respiratory tract (nasopharyngeal swab and throat swab) specimens.

Examples of situations where repeated testing may be beneficial could include the following:

- A ventilated patient is returning to a ventilator-skilled nursing facility after being critically ill with COVID-19
- A healthcare provider with COVID-19 infection who works with a highly vulnerable population (i.e. in a long-term care facility or neonatal intensive care unit)
- A patient with confirmed COVID-19 remains febrile and/or symptoms do not improve after 10 days.

These situations are examples only and the decision to conduct repeat testing may be made on a case-by-case basis. This decision and capacity to conduct repeat testing should be discussed with the clinical team, the patient and local health authorities.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-hospitalized-patients.html>

Guidance for Discontinuation of Inpatient Transmission-Based Precautions for Patients with COVID-19²:

The guidance below is intended for hospitalized patients in an acute care or residents of a long-term care facility who are diagnosed with COVID-19. Discontinuation of transmission-based precautions should be made using the guidance below in conjunction with clinical assessment of the patient, public health recommendations, and the need for additional isolation for other communicable diseases, including drug-resistant organisms. In addition to transmission-based precautions, healthcare workers are encouraged to adhere to standard precautions as appropriate for patient care.

The guidance below describes scenarios which may or may not include repeat testing.

Clinical Scenario	Criteria for Discontinuation of COVID-19 Isolation Precautions
<p>Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 who remains inpatient after symptoms have resolved</p>	<p>If additional testing is not conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient should remain on isolation until 7 DAYS after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND ○ Improvement in illness signs and symptoms
	<p>If additional testing is conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 consecutive sets of nasopharyngeal and throat swabs collected \geq 24 hours apart from a patient with COVID-19 (a total of four negative specimens) AND • Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND • Improvement in illness signs and symptoms

Guidance for Discontinuation of Home Isolation Precautions for Patients with COVID-19:

Patients with a diagnosis of COVID-19 who are discharged to home from an inpatient facility prior to a 7-day period free of fever and improvement in symptoms should be advised to follow home isolation precautions. Patients who are discharged to home isolation should be reminded to follow similar

² This guidance is based upon limited information and is subject to change as more information becomes available.

considerations to inpatient settings as described above. Patients can be discharged from the facility whenever clinically indicated.

Clinical Scenario	Criteria for Discontinuation of COVID-19 Home Isolation
Laboratory Confirmed Case of COVID-19 who are hospitalized and discharged home prior to resolution of symptoms	If additional testing is not conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient should remain on home isolation until 7 DAYS after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND ○ Improvement in illness signs and symptoms
	If additional testing is conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 consecutive sets of nasopharyngeal and throat swabs collected \geq 24 hours apart from a patient with COVID-19 (a total of four negative specimens) AND • Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND • Improvement in illness signs and symptoms

Guidance for Discontinuation of Home Isolation Precautions for Non-hospitalized Persons Under Investigation or Confirmed COVID-19 Infection

Some patients with suspect COVID-19 infection can be appropriately tested and managed in the outpatient setting and do not require a higher level of care. Patients who meet COVID-19 testing criteria are considered persons under investigations (PUIs). **PUIs who are discharged from an outpatient setting should be advised to follow home isolation guidance until their test results are available.** At that time, additional guidance can be given to PUIs based on these results. PUIs who test positive for COVID-19 should be instructed to follow similar guidance to those discharged from inpatient facilities. See the first table above. PUIs who test negative for the virus that causes COVID-19 should be advised that they may have another respiratory virus or contagious illness and follow the guidance below.

Clinical Scenario	Criteria for Discontinuation of Home Isolation
Non-Hospitalized Confirmed COVID-19 Patient	If additional testing is not conducted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient should remain on home isolation until 7 DAYS after: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND • Improvement in illness signs and symptoms

	<p>If additional testing is conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 consecutive sets of nasopharyngeal and throat swabs collected ≥ 24 hours apart from a patient with COVID-19 (a total of four negative specimens) AND • Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication AND • Improvement in illness signs and symptoms
<p>Non-Hospitalized PUI Awaiting Test Results</p>	<p>PUIs who are awaiting test results but NOT hospitalized should adhere to home isolation guidance until results return.</p>
	<p>IF POSITIVE for COVID-19 follow the criteria outlined just above for non-hospitalized confirmed cases</p>
	<p>IF NEGATIVE for COVID-19 patients should stay home and practice social distancing until 72 hours after resolution of fever and symptom improvement. At that time, they may resume regular activities.</p>

Guidance for Discontinuation of Home Isolation or transmission-based precautions for Persons Who May Have Symptoms of COVID-19 but Who Were Not Tested

Symptomatic persons who do not meet criteria for testing but consider themselves at high risk for COVID-19 infection may be advised to stay on home isolation or transmission-based precautions for the same 7-day period advised for those who have confirmed infection. This advice should be given based on epidemiologic and clinical risk factors and in consultation with the healthcare provider and public health personnel.

Additional Resources for Isolation and Transmission-Based Precautions:

- CDC: Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 in Homes and Residential Communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html#precautions>
- CDC: Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

- CDC: Protect Yourself and Your Family: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html>
- CDC: Resources for Healthcare Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>
- NJDOH: COVID-19 Information Page: <https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/ncov.shtml>