

## HEALTH ALERT

### Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Updated Guidance for Discontinuation of Isolation

May 4, 2020

#### Summary and Action Items

- On April 30, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated guidance for [“Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19”](#).
- On May 3, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [“Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings”](#) and [“Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings”](#).
- These updates were made based on [evidence suggesting a longer duration of viral shedding](#) and will be revised as additional evidence becomes available.

#### Updated Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel

On April 30, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [“Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19”](#). CDC changed the name of the ‘non-test-based strategy’ to the ‘symptom-based strategy’ for those with symptoms and the ‘time-based strategy’ for those without symptoms, and updated these to extend the duration of exclusion from work to at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared. Based on this extension of the symptom-based and time-based strategies, language about the test-based strategy being preferred was removed. Detailed guidance is available on the CDC website [here](#).

Healthcare facilities must be prepared for potential staffing shortages and have plans and processes to mitigate them. As a crisis capacity strategy, some facilities might consider permitting healthcare personnel to return to work without meeting all return to work criteria. In these circumstances, strict adherence to the recommendations included in CDC’s [“Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages”](#) is critical.

#### Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions

On May 3, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [“Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions and Disposition of Patients with COVID-19 in Healthcare Settings”](#). CDC changed the name of the ‘non-test-based strategy’ to the ‘symptom-based strategy’ for those with symptoms and the ‘time-based strategy’ for those without symptoms, and updated these to extend the duration of transmission-based precautions to at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared. Detailed guidance is available on the CDC website [here](#).

This time period will capture a greater proportion of contagious patients; however, it will not capture everyone. **In congregate living situations (such as nursing facilities) and with individuals who are hospitalized or severely immunocompromised, ODH continues to recommend that criteria for symptom-based and time-based strategies (i.e., non-test-based strategies) include at least 14 days passed from symptom onset or date of first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, respectively.** Ultimately, clinician judgment is required to determine release from transmission-based precautions.

CDC also added criteria for discontinuing transmission-based precautions for patients who have laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, but have not had any symptoms of COVID-19.

#### **Discontinuation of Isolation in Non-Healthcare Settings**

On May 3, 2020, CDC updated guidance for [“Discontinuation of Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 Not in Healthcare Settings”](#). CDC changed the name of the ‘non-test-based strategy’ to the ‘symptom-based strategy’ for those with symptoms. CDC also added a ‘time-based strategy’ and named the ‘test-based strategy’ for asymptomatic persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. The home isolation period has been extended from 7 to 10 days since symptoms first appeared for the symptom-based strategy in persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and from 7 to 10 days after the date of their first positive test for the time-based strategy in asymptomatic persons with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. Detailed guidance is available on the CDC website [here](#).

#### **Contact**

Immediately report all confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19 to the local health department in the jurisdiction in which the case resides. To locate a local health department, please visit <https://odhgateway.odh.ohio.gov/lhdinformationsystem/Directory/GetMyLHD>.

For general questions related to COVID-19, healthcare providers and facilities should contact their local health department. Ohio local health departments should contact the ODH Bureau of Infectious Diseases at 614-995-5599.