



**To:** CAHAN San Diego Participants  
**Date:** January 27, 2021  
**From:** Public Health Services

### **Health Advisory Update #24: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Quarantine Update**

#### **Key Messages**

- While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is still recommending a 14-day quarantine period, they recently released a scientific brief and are allowing local jurisdictions to choose to shorten quarantine periods.
- The quarantine period for close contacts to COVID-19 has been [revised locally](#) to align with California Department of Public Health (CDPH) quarantine guidelines.
- Asymptomatic close contacts may discontinue quarantine after Day 10 from the date of last exposure only IF they are can monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly adhere to routine COVID-19 prevention interventions, especially use of face coverings and social distancing from Day 11 through Day 14.
- For facilities experiencing staffing shortage, shorter 7-day quarantine with a required a negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test on or after Day 5 is permitted for asymptomatic healthcare workers, emergency response workers, and certain social service workers.
- Healthcare employers with critical staffing shortages may use the [updated COVID-19 Quarantine Guidance](#) released by CDPH where asymptomatic healthcare personnel are allowed to work after the 7-day quarantine and negative PCR test with a surgical mask or respirator, but still report temperature and absence of symptoms each day until 14 days after exposure.

#### **Situation**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) generally recommends a 14-day quarantine period. However, they released a [scientific brief](#) with alternate options for shortening quarantine for local public health departments to consider, based on local circumstances and resources, because 14-day quarantine can impose burdens that affect physical and mental health, as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance. In addition, the prospect of quarantine may also dissuade recently diagnosed persons from naming contacts and may dissuade contacts from responding to contact tracer outreach, if they perceive quarantine as onerous.

CDC reviewed modeling data to determine the residual post-quarantine transmission risk if quarantine was discontinued early and recommended two shorter alternate quarantine options. These options were presented with the recognition that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances a reduced burden of quarantine and the potential for increased compliance against a small possibility of increasing the spread of the virus. In both options, additional criteria must be met (e.g., continued symptom monitoring, use of face coverings through Day 14).

### CDC Modeling Estimates

Last day of quarantine and the estimated residual post quarantine transmission risk with and without negative polymerase chain reaction (PCR) collected within 48 hours prior to release are presented in the table below:

Last Day of Quarantine	Residual Transmission Risk Median (Range)
Day 7 with negative PCR	4.0% (2.3%-8.6%)
Day 10	1.4% (0.1%-10.6%)
Day 10 with negative PCR	0.3% (0-2.4%)
Day 14	0.1% (0-3%)

[CDPH guidance released on December 14](#) supports the discontinuation of quarantine for all asymptomatic close contacts after Day 10 with or without testing. This updated guidance is [adapted locally](#), as well.

In California and San Diego County, the [shorter Day 7 quarantine](#) plus a negative PCR test (when collected on or after Day 5) is to only be used for asymptomatic healthcare workers, emergency response workers, and social service workers (who work face-to-face with clients in the child welfare system or in assisted living facilities) during critical staffing shortages. Health care employers facing staffing shortages that could impact safe patient care may also use CDC [Contingency Capacity Strategies](#).

### **Actions Requested**

- Close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 cases are required to self-quarantine for 10 days after their last contact with the infectious person. If they remain asymptomatic, after Day 10 they can discontinue quarantine **on the condition that they follow these additional precautions:**

From Day 11 through Day 14 they must BOTH

- Strictly adhere to all routine COVID-19 prevention interventions including, wearing a face covering whenever around other people (or Personal Protective Equipment, as required), keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from others, and washing hands often, AND
  - Continue to monitor daily for COVID-19 symptoms. If symptoms develop, they must isolate immediately and contact their healthcare provider, clinician advice line, or telemedicine provider for a medical assessment and arrange a test for COVID-19.
- Those living or working in high-risk congregate settings (e.g., skilled nursing facilities, prisons, jails, shelters) or residing or working with immunosuppressed persons (e.g., bone marrow or solid organ transplants, chemotherapy) should still quarantine for 14 days in the absence of staffing shortages.
  - If quarantined in a congregate setting, hotel or multi-unit setting, the person may not enter other units within that setting. Persons may leave their place of quarantine to receive necessary medical care.
  - Asymptomatic healthcare workers, first responders, and social workers (who work face-to-face with clients in the child welfare system or in assisted living facilities) are allowed to return to work after Day 7 from last exposure if they have a negative PCR test result from a specimen collected on or after Day 5 and continue to remain asymptomatic if their employer is experiencing critical staffing shortages and notifies employees of this change. Respective individuals after Day 7 must wear surgical face masks through Day 14 when leaving the home.

- Healthcare employers with critical staffing shortages may use [Crisis Care Strategies](#), as described by CDPH, where asymptomatic healthcare personnel (including skilled nursing facilities during an outbreak when all staff are potentially exposed) are allowed to work with a surgical mask or respirator, but still report temperature and absence of symptoms each day until 14 days after exposure.
  
- Carefully review and closely follow all other requirements of the Health Officer Order and medical provider. [Home Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 Close Contacts](#) should be followed by those on home quarantine, because of exposure to a COVID-19 patient.
  
- If a person in quarantine develops symptoms, they should contact their medical provider. Signs and symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, fatigue, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. The medical provider should then provide instructions on the need to isolate and test for COVID-19.
  - [The Public Health Officer's Isolation Order is found here](#)
  - [Isolation instructions for patients are found here](#)

Thank you for your continued participation.

**CAHAN San Diego**

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