

Dear Patients and Families,

We continue to encourage everyone to perform frequent handwashing and practice social distancing. While masks are not required or recommended in schools or camps, except for in school health offices, any individual who wishes to continue to mask, including those who face higher risk from COVID-19, should be supported in that choice. For those who need or choose to mask, masking is never required in these settings while the individual is eating, drinking, sleeping or outside.

Everyone is encouraged to stay up to date with vaccination, as vaccines remain the best way to help protect yourself and others.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued new guidelines on 08/15/2022 for children and staff in child care, K-12, OST, and recreational camp settings.

**Please do not call the office for questions about what to do if your child has been exposed to COVID or has been diagnosed with COVID - refer to the guidelines below!**

Most of your questions will be answered in the guidelines

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The following guidelines provide the most recent recommendations for managing individuals with a positive COVID test, as well as identified close contacts of people with COVID.

Please see the CDC Website for instructions on the difference between [isolation and quarantine](#).

## **Positive COVID Test**

Positive test for COVID (either by rapid antigen test or PCR test) regardless of vaccination status.

- a positive rapid antigen test does not need to be confirmed with a PCR test
- a rapid antigen test, such as a self-test, is preferred to a PCR test in most situations
- to count days for isolation, Day 0 is the first day of symptoms OR the day positive test was taken, whichever is earlier

### **Guidelines:**

1. Stay at home for 5 days
2. No symptoms or symptoms are resolving after 5 days, and fever-free without the use of fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, patient can leave house and return to school after day 5
3. Wear a high quality mask around others for 5 more days (this includes wearing a mask at home as well as outside the home)
  - If the child has a negative test on day 5 or later, they do not need to wear a mask
  - If unable to wear a mask, the child may return with a negative test on day 5 or later
4. Continue to stay home until fever has resolved for 24 hours
5. If test on Day 6 is positive, continue to isolate
6. Avoid people who are at high risk of disease for 10 days

7. Send a MyChart message to let us know

*Please note: the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) agrees with the above isolation guidelines (5 days at home, 5 days masked) and does not require a negative test to return to school.*

### **Reasons to call the office for guidance:**

1. Chest pain
2. Increased work of breathing/labored breathing
3. Concerns for dehydration
4. Fever (> 101) for more than 72 hours in child younger than 2 years of age
5. Fever (>101) for more than 120 hours (5 days) in child 2 years of age or older

### **Cardiac Clearance Requirements:**

1. Applies only to children over 12 years old
2. An office visit is required at least 10 days after symptoms are resolved if:
  - o Greater than 4 days of fever > 100.4 degrees
  - o Greater than 7 days of muscle aches, chills, or extreme fatigue
  - o Hospitalized
3. For all others with asymptomatic or mild disease, you may call the office once out of isolation (see above) and a nurse will assist you in providing a clearance letter for a graduated return-to-play protocol
  - o This applies if there was less than 4 days of fever >100.4 and less than 7 days of muscle aches, chills, or extreme fatigue

## **Close Contact of Individual with COVID**

This guideline is for people identified as a close contact of an individual with COVID regardless of vaccination status

### **Guidelines:**

1. Quarantine no longer recommended
2. May continue to attend school as long as no symptoms
3. Wear a mask around others (including at home) for 10 days
  - o If unable to wear a mask, isolate at home and may return with a negative test on Day 5 or later
4. Test on day 6 (if possible)
  - o Positive rapid antigen tests are assumed to be positive and do not need confirmation
5. If any symptoms develop, get a tested and stay home

### **A Word About Continuous Exposure:**

Please note that if your exposure is continuous and you are unable to separate from someone who has COVID, you are being exposed to COVID every day. The quarantine period is longer since your date of last exposure is constantly changing.

For example, if a mother tests positive for COVID and is unable to separate from a baby. The baby is therefore being exposed to COVID on each day that the mother remains infectious (10 days, assuming mild symptoms). The baby then needs an additional 10 days of quarantine

starting when the mother is no longer assumed to be infectious. In this scenario, the baby should be tested 5 days after the mother is no longer infectious (day 15 after her diagnosis) and needs to quarantine for 20 days total.