

Guidance for Daily COVID-19 Symptom Screening of Staff and Guests

Summary of March 9, 2021 changes

- New information added for vaccinated individuals.

Summary of March 1, 2021 changes

- Updated language for mask and face covering fit and material in alignment with CDC recommendations.
- Added quarantine recommendations for fully vaccinated individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Updated information on COVID-19 hotline hours and days of operations.

Introduction

The Washington State Department of Health recommends employers use this guidance to screen staff and guests (but not customers in retail) at the start of each shift or visit to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

What is symptom screening?

[Infection prevention in the workplace](#) is important to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Screening is one way employers can lower the chance of COVID-19 transmission. Screening will not identify people not yet showing symptoms, or who may be infected but show no symptoms.

Who should be screened?

Screen staff and guests who enter the workplace. This does not include customers who are in a public-facing area (for example, customers at a restaurant or supermarket).

When should a business screen staff and guests?

Screen staff and guests at the start of every shift or visit.

How should a business set up symptom screening?

- If you plan in-person health checks, do them safely and respectfully. Employers may use physical distancing, barriers or walls, or personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the screener. Using PPE alone is not as good as using physical distancing, and users need to be trained how to use PPE. Please refer to guidance from the Department of Labor & Industries [Which Mask for Which Task](#) document to determine the appropriate level of PPE.

- Give screening information in languages that staff and guests understand. Additional information can be found on the Department of Health’s [Resources and Recommendations](#) page.
- Do health checks in a way that helps keep people from crowding, such as offering more than one screening entrance into the building.
- To prevent stigma and discrimination, make staff health screenings as private as possible. Do not judge staff or guests based on race or country of origin.
- Keep medical status and history safe from others. Follow guidance from the [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#) for safekeeping of medical records from health checks.
- Keep a record of daily symptom screening results for at least 28 days.
- Follow the directions below on [How to screen for COVID-19](#). A additional screening tool example is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/screening/index.html>.

How to screen for COVID-19

Ask the following questions.

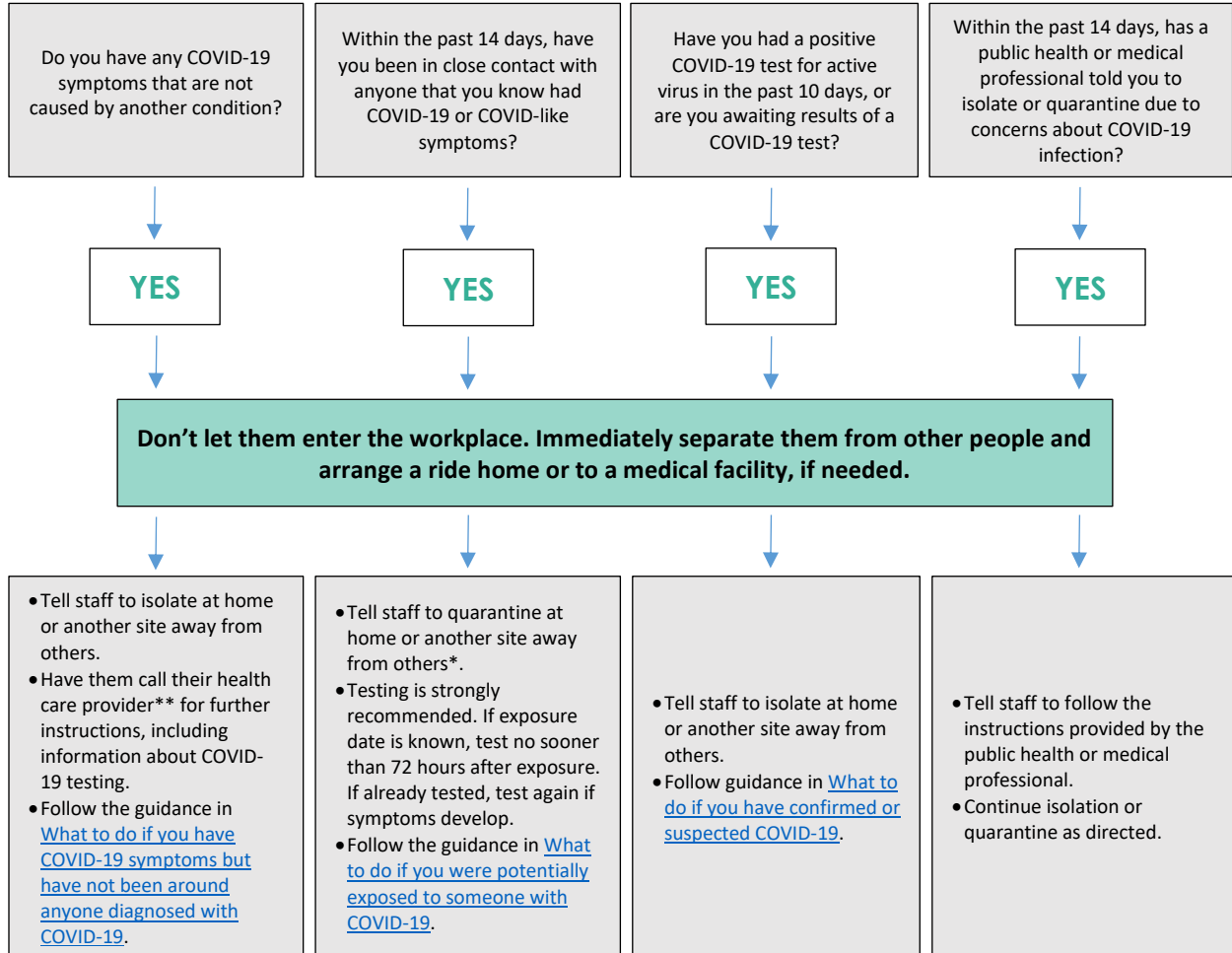
1. Do you have any of these [symptoms](#) that are not caused by another condition?
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Recent loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
2. Within the past 14 days, have you been in close contact with anyone that you know had COVID-19 or COVID-like symptoms? Close contact is being within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period with a person; or having direct contact with fluids from a person with COVID-19 with or without wearing a mask (i.e., being coughed or sneezed on).
3. Have you had a positive COVID-19 test for active virus in the past 10 days, or are you awaiting results of a COVID-19 test?
4. Within the past 14 days, has a public health or medical professional told you to self-monitor, self-isolate, or self-quarantine because of concerns about COVID-19 infection?

What’s the difference between isolation and quarantine?

- **Isolation** is what you do if you have COVID-19 symptoms, are awaiting test results, or have tested positive. Isolation means you stay home and away from others (including household members) for the recommended period of time to avoid spreading illness.
- **Quarantine** is what you do if you have been exposed to COVID-19. Quarantine means you stay home and away from others for the recommended period of time in case you

are infected and are contagious. Quarantine becomes isolation if you later test positive for COVID-19 or develop symptoms.

What should a business do if staff answer “yes” to these questions?



*Bringing exposed critical infrastructure or essential workers who are not experiencing any symptoms and have not tested positive back into onsite operations should be used as a **last resort and only in limited circumstances**, such as when cessation of operation of a facility may cause serious harm or danger to public health or safety. See [this guidance from the CDC](#) and contact your local health department for more information.

Current quarantine recommendations are to stay in quarantine for 14 days after last contact. **This is the safest option.** Monitor symptoms during this time, and if any [COVID-19 symptoms](#) develop during the 14 days, get tested. Certain high-risk settings or groups **should** use the 14-day quarantine option:

- People who have recently been in [countries where the new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, 501Y.V, has been identified.](#)
- People who work or stay in an acute or long-term healthcare setting.
- People who work or stay in a correctional facility.

- People who work or stay in a shelter or transitional housing.
- People who live in communal housing such as dormitories, fraternities or sororities.
- People who work in crowded work situations where physical distancing is impossible due to the nature of the work such as in a warehouse or factory.
- People who work on fishing or seafood processing vessels.

If this is not possible, stay in quarantine for 10 days after your last contact, without additional testing. If any COVID-19 symptoms develop during the 10 days, stay in quarantine the full 14 days and get tested. **Keep watching for symptoms until day 14.**

Under special circumstances it may be possible to end quarantine after 7 full days beginning after last contact *if you have been without symptoms and after receiving a negative result from a test (get tested no sooner than 48 hours before ending quarantine.) This will depend on availability of testing resources.* **Keep watching for symptoms until day 14.**

Note: Consult your local health jurisdiction to determine the best option for your specific circumstances.

****If somebody does not have a doctor or health care provider:** many locations have free or low-cost testing, regardless of immigration status. See the [Department of Health's Testing FAQ](#) or call the [WA State COVID-19 Information Hotline](#).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced new guidance that fully vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with COVID-19 are **not** required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (see [When You've Been Fully Vaccination](#) section below for more information.)
- Have not had symptoms since current COVID-19 exposure.

Fully vaccinated persons should still watch for symptoms for 14 days after their exposure. They should also continue to wear masks, practice social distancing, and keep their social circles small.

An exception to the guidance is that vaccinated inpatients and residents in healthcare settings should continue to quarantine following an exposure to someone with COVID-19.

Persons who do not meet both criteria should continue to follow [current quarantine guidance](#) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.

Prevent the spread of COVID-19

- [Wear a cloth face covering](#) in indoor public settings like the grocery store, pharmacy, hardware store, health clinic, and other locations. You should also wear a face covering outside if you cannot keep six feet (or two meters) away from other people at all times. A cloth face covering is anything that completely covers your mouth and nose, and fits securely on the sides of your face and under your chin. It should be made of two or more layers of tightly woven fabric with ties or straps that go around your head or behind your ears.

Guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommends strategies](#) to improve mask fitting to more effectively slow the spread of COVID-19.

These strategies include wearing a cloth mask over a medical procedure mask, knotting the ear loops of a medical procedure mask, using a mask fitter, or using a nylon covering over a mask. In addition, DOH does not recommend the use of masks with exhalation valves or vents, or single layer bandanas and gaiters.

It is important to wear a mask in all public settings combined with continued implementation of effective public health measures such as vaccination, physical distancing, hand hygiene, and isolation and quarantine.

- **Maintain 6 feet of physical distance** from others at all times, even if using a mask.
- **Clean your hands often.** Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Do not touch your face with unwashed hands.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Throw used tissues away and wash your hands.
- **Clean “high-touch” surfaces frequently**, like counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe and follow the directions on the label.
- **Don’t share personal items with anyone**, including dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding.

When You’ve Been Fully Vaccinated

People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, like the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, like Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine

Note: if it has been less than 2 weeks since your shot, or if you still need to get your second dose, you are NOT fully protected. Keep taking all [prevention steps](#) until you are fully vaccinated.

Regardless of your vaccination status, you should still take steps to [protect yourself and others](#) while in public settings. This includes wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. In addition, you should still avoid medium or large-sized gatherings and continue to watch for [symptoms of COVID-19](#), especially if you’ve been around someone who is sick.

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

More COVID-19 Information and Resources

Stay up-to-date on the [current COVID-19 situation in Washington](#), [Governor Inslee’s proclamations](#), [symptoms](#), [how it spreads](#), and [how and when people should get tested](#). See our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

A person’s race/ethnicity or nationality does not, itself, put them at greater risk of COVID-19. However, data are revealing that communities of color are being disproportionately impacted

by COVID-19. This is due to the effects of racism, and in particular, structural racism, that leaves some groups with fewer opportunities to protect themselves and their communities. [Stigma will not help to fight the illness](#). Share only accurate information to keep rumors and misinformation from spreading.

- [WA State Department of Health 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [WA State Coronavirus Response \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Find Your Local Health Department or District](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Stigma Reduction Resources](#)

Have more questions? Call our COVID-19 Information hotline: **1-800-525-0127**

Monday – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., Tuesday – Sunday and [observed state holidays](#), 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. For interpretative services, **press #** when they answer and **say your language**. For questions about your own health, COVID-19 testing, or testing results, please contact a health care provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 ([Washington Relay](#)) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.