

## Symptom Based Strategy for Discontinuation for COVID Precautions

### Discontinuation of COVID Precautions for Laboratory Confirmed COVID-19 Positive Patients

#### Background:

Recent updates from the CDC no longer recommend a test-based strategy for determining when patients can be removed from COVID-19 isolation/precautions. These recommendations are based on data which demonstrate that patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 remain infectious no longer than 10 days after symptom onset, and that patients with more severe-to-critical illness remain infectious no longer than 20 days after symptom onset. In accordance with these changes, MedStar Health now recommends a change to a symptom-based strategy.

#### Definitions:

**Mild Illness:** Individuals who have any of the various signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, sore throat, malaise, headache, muscle pain) without shortness of breath, dyspnea, or abnormal chest imaging.

**Moderate Illness:** Individuals who have evidence of lower respiratory disease by clinical assessment or imaging, and a saturation of oxygen (SpO<sub>2</sub>) ≥94% on room air at sea level.

**Severe Illness:** Individuals who have respiratory frequency >30 breaths per minute, SpO<sub>2</sub> <94% on room air at sea level (or, for patients with chronic hypoxemia, a decrease from baseline of >3%), ratio of arterial partial pressure of oxygen to fraction of inspired oxygen (PaO<sub>2</sub>/FiO<sub>2</sub>) <300 mmHg, or lung infiltrates >50%.

**Critical Illness:** Individuals who have respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction

#### Severely Immunocompromised:

- Chemotherapy for cancer or,
- Untreated HIV infection with CD4 T lymphocyte count < 200 or,
- Combined primary immunodeficiency disorder or,
- Receipt of prednisone >20mg/day for more than 14 days or,
- ANC<500
- Within the last 1 year
  - Bone marrow transplant
  - Solid organ transplant

### Symptom-Based Strategy for Discontinuing COVID Precautions

#### **Asymptomatic (throughout infection) and NOT Severely Immunocompromised**

COVID Precautions may be discontinued when:

1. At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test.

#### **Asymptomatic (throughout Infection) and Severely Immunocompromised**

2. At least 20 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test.

#### **Symptomatic Lab Confirmed: Mild to Moderate Illness and Not Severely Immunocompromised:**

COVID Precautions may be discontinued:

1. At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*  
**and**
2. At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications  
**and**
3. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

#### **Symptomatic Lab Confirmed Severe to critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised:**

COVID Precautions may be discontinued:

1. At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*  
**and**
2. At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications  
**and**
3. Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved



**Role of PCR Testing to Discontinue Isolation or Precautions**

1. For persons who are severely immunocompromised, a test-based strategy could be considered in consultation with infectious diseases experts.
2. For all others, a test-based strategy is no longer recommended except to discontinue isolation or precautions earlier than would occur under the strategies outlined above
3. For persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptoms onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified then the person may warrant retesting and consultation with infectious diseases expertise is recommended.
4. For persons previously diagnosed with symptomatic COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, retesting is not recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection. In addition, quarantine is not recommended in the event of close contact with an infected person.
5. For persons who never developed symptoms, the date of first positive PCR test should be used in place of the date of symptoms onset.