



# Health Alert



## **UPDATED Interim COVID-19 Testing Guidance for Exposed Individuals**

July 20, 2020

### **Summary and Action Items**

- As contact tracing efforts expand, Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) interim COVID-19 testing guidance now recommends testing of all individuals with close contact to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- CDPH interim guidance now recommends that asymptomatic contacts be tested during their 14-day quarantine period, ideally between days 5 and 9 after exposure to a positive case.
- A negative result does not rule out developing COVID-19 disease and does not clear a close contact to return to work, school or public places sooner than 14 days from the date of last exposure. Quarantine for 14 days is essential to continue to monitor for symptoms.
- Healthcare providers may field increased volume of referrals for testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic exposed individuals from all reopened congregate settings but childcare settings in particular.
- Positive cases should be instructed to immediately ensure all household members quarantine and to notify other close contacts to quarantine, if possible.

**Background:** In order to protect the progress we've made in Chicago to reduce COVID-19 transmission, as of July 20, 2020, Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) interim guidance now recommends that all contacts of confirmed cases are tested for COVID-19. Symptomatic contacts should be tested as soon as symptoms develop. Asymptomatic contacts should be tested ideally between days 5 and 9 after exposure to a positive case. As contact tracing capacity increases and this recommendation is communicated at a larger scale, healthcare provider offices may field increased requests for testing of symptomatic and asymptomatic contacts. By definition, close contacts are individuals with whom the positive case was within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes starting 2 days prior to their first day of symptoms (or for asymptomatic individuals their test date) through their last day at the facility.

Since mid-June, COVID-19 case incidence among 18-29 year-olds in Chicago has been high and increasing. Data trends continue to be posted to the [Chicago COVID-19 Dashboard](#). Congregate settings/reopened activities with younger children are expected to prompt a high volume of healthcare provider outreach given an increase in reports over the past 2 weeks for COVID-19 cases in adults and children from 16 daycares, 2 camps and 2 sports teams. CDPH encourages healthcare provider offices to meet this need and potentially use the opportunity to perform routine preventive care that was previously delayed (e.g., routine or catch-up vaccination, chronic disease screenings) as long as [universal infection control precautions](#) are in place. Outreach and education to camps, faith communities, childcare settings and other congregate settings have reinforced that families and staff are expected to immediately notify the location if the child/staff member or someone in their home tests positive, or if the child/staff member has been in close contact (within 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes) with a positive case.

### **UPDATED Interim Testing Recommendations for Close Contacts and Travelers**

As of July 20, 2020, all close contacts (with or without symptoms) and [travelers from high-incidence states](#) are recommended to be tested during their quarantine period. For symptomatic contacts, this should be as soon as symptoms are detected. For asymptomatic contacts, this should be ideally **between days 5 and 9 after exposure to a positive case**. Close contacts of positive cases will be referred to their healthcare provider to

arrange for testing. If other testing options are needed, refer to the [City of Chicago's coronavirus testing website](#).

- A negative result **does not rule out developing COVID-19 disease** and does not clear a close contact to return to work, school or public places sooner than 14 days from the date of last exposure. Quarantine for 14 days is essential to continue to monitor for symptoms.
- If negative, but the contact later develops symptoms, they should be retested for COVID-19.
- A positive result should be reported to CDPH within 24 hours as per usual practice. Outpatient healthcare facilities and other congregate settings like daycares, camps, faith communities, homeless shelters, workplaces can report individual cases as well as clusters through the confidential CDPH COVID-19 Online Case Report Form: <http://redcap.link/chicovidreport>. (Select “Cluster of 2 or more case OR single case in a congregate setting.”)
- If positive, individuals should isolate themselves until:
  - It has been at least 10 days since the onset of the individual’s illness or specimen collection date;
  - The individual’s symptoms, including cough, have improved; and
  - The individual is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications for >24 hours.

If symptoms develop at any time during the 14 days, the individual should be evaluated and tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

- A negative result does not rule out developing COVID-19 disease. Quarantine for 14 days is essential to continue to monitor for symptoms. If symptoms worsen, the individual should speak with their healthcare provider to discuss retesting.

NOTE: Universal testing before entering group activities such as athletic conditioning or other camps is still not recommended and should not replace daily symptom screening, quarantine policies, and messaging to attendees about the importance of social distancing outside of the group activity.

### **Considerations for Pediatric Providers Regarding Childcare Setting Exposures and Return Policies**

CDPH released “[Chicago Department of Public Health Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 Cases in Childcare Settings, July 13, 2020](#)” to Chicago childcare facilities to encourage reporting of individual cases as well as clusters through the confidential CDPH COVID-19 Online Case Report Form: <http://redcap.link/chicovidreport>.

During Phase 4 of Reopening amid the COVID-19 response, all children and staff within the positive individual’s classroom are considered close contacts and instructed to quarantine at home for 14 days from the last day of contact with the positive case. This will prompt contact tracing for each case including new recommendations for testing of asymptomatic exposures at days 5 to 9 from last exposure.

- Pediatric and Family Practice offices should expect increased calls from parents requesting testing for their exposed child.
  - Testing for symptomatic exposed children is recommended to be performed right away.
  - Testing for asymptomatic exposed children is recommended to occur 5-9 days after the last date of exposure.
- Please facilitate testing at your facility if possible and be aware that not all public or urgent care testing locations will test children.
- If you cannot see the patient, please refer to the [City of Chicago's coronavirus testing website](#) and direct them to another testing site.
- Enhance internal testing capacity or become familiar with alternate testing capacity in your patients’ communities to support increased contact tracing and case identification efforts.

In order to track Chicago’s COVID-19 activity, please bookmark Chicago’s new COVID Dashboard: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home/covid-dashboard.html>. Please also reference the [Daily Status Report](#) and [Hospital Capacity Report](#) as needed to inform decision making.