

UPDATE: Quarantine Recommendations After SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination

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TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Alison V. Beam, JD, Acting Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Update: Quarantine Recommendations After SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination
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This transmission is a “Health Update,” provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL; **EMS COUNCILS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **FQHCs:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE **LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE; **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR MEMBERSHIP; **LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES:** PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, INFECTION CONTROL, AND NURSING STAFF IN YOUR FACILITY

- On February 10, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its [quarantine recommendations](#) to reflect SARS-CoV-2 vaccination status.
- People who are vaccinated against COVID-19 do **NOT** need to quarantine after an exposure to another person with COVID-19 if they meet **ALL** of the following criteria:
 - They are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine);
 - They are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series; AND,
 - They have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.
- These criteria can be applied to healthcare providers (HCPs) as a strategy to alleviate staffing shortages but does **NOT** apply to inpatients or residents in healthcare settings.
- Regardless of vaccination status, persons who exhibit new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 still need to [isolate](#) and be evaluated for COVID-19 testing.
- Close contacts who have not received vaccine or who do not meet all of the above criteria must follow existing [quarantine](#) guidance.
- DOH continues to recommend COVID-19 prevention measures such as masking, physical distancing, avoiding nonessential travel, and hand hygiene for all people regardless of vaccination status.
- If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or 1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).

Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) provides this guidance based on available information about COVID-19 and is subject to change.

In conjunction with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) has updated the quarantine guidance for people who are fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2. This guidance applies to the general population, including businesses and schools. This guidance can be applied to healthcare personnel (HCP) as a strategy to alleviate staffing shortages but does **NOT** apply to inpatients or residents in healthcare settings except in very limited circumstances as described below.

Vaccinated people who are not residents or inpatients in healthcare settings do not need to quarantine after exposure to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 provided they meet ALL the following criteria:

- They are fully vaccinated (i.e., ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥ 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine);
- They are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series; AND,
- They have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure.

This recommendation to waive quarantine for people with vaccine-derived immunity aligns with [quarantine recommendations for those with natural immunity](#). Persons who do not meet all 3 of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidance ([PA-HAN-538](#)) after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. These criteria could also be applied when considering work restrictions for fully vaccinated healthcare personnel with [higher-risk exposures](#) in a healthcare setting and exposures in the community or in their household as a strategy to alleviate staffing shortages. Information on high risk exposures in healthcare settings can be found in [PA-HAN-510](#). Exposed, fully vaccinated, healthcare personnel would not be required to quarantine at home or in the community but may not continue to work during the 14-day quarantine period unless restricting the work of these individuals would create severe staffing shortages. For example, under crisis capacity strategies for staffing, vaccinated exposed individuals should be returned to work before unvaccinated exposed staff.

Vaccinated inpatients and residents of healthcare settings should continue to quarantine following an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19; outpatients should be cared for using appropriate [Transmission-Based Precautions](#). This exception is due to the unknown vaccine effectiveness in this population, the higher risk of severe disease and death, and challenges with social distancing in healthcare settings. Although not preferred, healthcare facilities could consider waiving quarantine for vaccinated patients and residents as a strategy to mitigate critical issues (e.g., lack of space, staff, or PPE to safely care for exposed patients or residents) when other options are unsuccessful or unavailable. These decisions should be made in consultation with public health officials and infection control experts.

These quarantine recommendations for vaccinated persons, including the criteria for timing since receipt of the last dose in the vaccination series, will be updated when more data become available and additional COVID-19 vaccines are authorized.

Regardless of vaccination status, any person with new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 still needs to [isolate](#) and be evaluated for COVID-19 testing.

DOH and CDC continue to discourage any nonessential travel, even for people who are fully vaccinated, because protection is not 100%, durability of immunity is unknown, and there are new circulating strains of SARS-CoV-2 in other states and countries that are being investigated.

Additionally, DOH continues to recommend COVID-19 prevention measures such as masking, physical distancing, and hand hygiene for all people regardless of vaccination status.

If you have questions about this guidance, please call your local health department or **1-877-PA-HEALTH (1-877-724-3258)**.

Individuals interested in receiving further PA-HANs are encouraged to register at <https://han.pa.gov/>.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of February 12, 2021 but may be modified in the future. We will continue to post updated information regarding the most common questions about this subject.
