

Health Advisory

CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance and Additional Doses of COVID-19 Vaccine for Those Aged 65+ March 13, 2024

SUMMARY POINTS

- People in *community settings* with respiratory symptoms should stay at home until symptoms are improving and they are fever free for 24 hours AND take transmission-based precautions for 5 days after leaving home.
- **Recommendations for isolation and exposure in healthcare settings have not changed.**
- People aged 65 years and older currently make up the majority (70%) of those hospitalized with COVID-19 and are now eligible for an additional dose of vaccine provided it has been at least 4 months since the last dose.
- Individuals of all ages should receive at least one dose of updated COVID-19 vaccine this season.

Updated CDC guidance for community settings

People in *community settings* including non-healthcare congregate settings, should follow a two-phase approach to preventing forward transmission:

- 1) Stay at home and away from others until symptoms are improving with no fever for 24 hours without the use of antipyretics. Improving symptoms means the person is starting to feel better and can do their usual daily activities. A person who is afebrile as above and has lingering symptoms that have improved, such as cough, are able to move to phase 2.
- 2) Use transmission-based precautions for 5 days, including improving air quality, masking, physical distancing, and testing before gathering with others. A negative rapid antigen test post-illness is reliable in predicting that a person is less like to be infectious.

Specific guidance for non-healthcare congregate settings, such as confinement facilities and shelters will be provided by PDPH.

Rationale

- Weekly hospital admissions for COVID-19 have decreased by more than 75% and deaths by more than 90% compared to January 2022, despite levels of viral activity similar to prior years.
- 98% of the U.S. population has immunity from COVID-19, either from natural infection, vaccination or both. Vaccinating previously infected individuals remains valuable as hybrid immunity provides more robust protection than natural infection alone.
- Highly effective vaccines and antivirals significantly reduce the risk of severe disease, with strong evidence that vaccination reduces the risk of post-viral syndromes (i.e. Post acute sequelae of SARS-CoV2 infection (PASC) or Long-COVID).
- Many states and countries changed their COVID-19 isolation guidance without clear increases in community transmission or hospitalization (e.g. Ontario, Quebec, and British Columbia, Australia, Denmark, France, Norway, California and Oregon).

Isolation and exposure recommendations for [healthcare settings](#), including acute, post-acute and outpatient settings have not changed.

Additional dose of updated COVID-19 vaccine for those aged 65+

Although deaths and hospitalizations have decreased overall, COVID-19 continues to be both more severe and more deadly in older adults than other respiratory illnesses. More than two thirds of hospitalizations due to COVID-19 occur in those 65 and older. In addition, in the past several years, we have seen COVID-19 increases in the summer as well as the

winter. For both of these reasons the CDC recommends that people in this age group receive an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccine if it has been 4 months since their last dose.

[IDSA Clinician Call: Updates on CDC's New Respiratory Virus Guidance, COVID Antivirals, and the Emergence of Clade I Mpx: March 14th, 4PM EST](#)

[CDC's Updated Respiratory Virus Guidance: What to do When You Are Sick | CDC](#)
[Clinical Guidance for COVID-19 Vaccination | CDC](#)