



# Department of Public Health

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## ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE GUIDELINES FOR INDIVIDUALS

El Paso, Texas

**(UPDATED 08/03/2021)**

This Guidance supersedes the “Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines for Individuals” issued April 27, 2021.

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), in alignment with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for isolation and quarantine and considering evidence-based public health interventions to reduce infection and spread of COVID-19 in our community, is updating the Isolation and Quarantine guidelines for the City and County of El Paso, Texas.

The DPH has adopted and is recommending the symptom-based method for those symptomatic individuals during their infection or the time-based method for those individuals who tested positive without symptoms. **The test-based method is no longer recommended.**

### ISOLATION

Individuals who have symptoms and test positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, should maintain isolation for at least **10 days**, and may be released if:

- At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* ; **AND**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed **WITHOUT** fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Has shown improvement in symptoms.

Unvaccinated individuals who have **NO** symptoms but test positive for COVID-19 and have not been sick with COVID-19 within the last 90 days, should isolate for at least **10 days** from the date of first positive specimen collected (assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test).

**Angela Mora – Health Director**

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Vaccinated individuals who are exposed should get tested between 3-5 days and if positive, should isolate for at least **10 days** from the date of the positive specimen collected (assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test).

Individuals who develop severe disease or are immunocompromised, regardless of immunization status, should be under isolation for at least 20 days and may be released if:

- At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*; **AND**
- At least 1 day (24 hours) have passed **WITHOUT** fever and without the use of fever-reducing medications; **AND**
- Has shown improvement in symptoms.

An individual who has a **severe immunocompromising condition** and test positive for COVID-19 and has **NO** symptoms, should isolate for at least **20 days** from the date of first positive specimen collected.

NOTE: If individuals develop symptoms, then they should be in isolation for a minimum of 10 days from the date of symptom onset.

## QUARANTINE

The purpose of quarantine is to physically separate an individual exposed to COVID-19 from others that are currently healthy, thereby avoiding further spread of the virus among susceptible individuals.

**Unvaccinated individuals** should quarantine for a minimum of **10 days** of initial high-risk exposure. Individuals should monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and wear a face mask/covering for a total of 14 days. All individuals will be counseled about the need to strictly adhere to all recommended preventative measures.

If a quarantined individual develops symptoms and is diagnosed with COVID-19, other individuals in the same household will require evaluation as contacts and should be isolated and/or quarantined accordingly.

Testing for the purpose of evaluation for infection on exposed or symptomatic individuals must be prioritized and done between 3-5 days post-exposure; however, a

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negative result will not shorten or terminate the 10-day quarantine period. Individuals can opt to continue quarantine for 14 days without testing to further reduce the risk of virus transmission.

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The risk of secondary transmission is elevated when housing is shared, such is the case of congregate settings (i.e. family households, prisons, students, or military recruits), and every effort should be made to physically separate the quarantined individual from others. If possible, quarantined individuals should reside alone in a separate closed room or closed area and have exclusive use of their own bathroom.

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In the event that separation of quarantined individuals is not feasible, those individuals who are quarantined together should take steps to prevent spread of infection within the household. Mitigating strategies to prevent the spread of infection include correct and consistent use of masks or face coverings, appropriate distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning, and disinfection, ensuring adequate ventilation, and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness.

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## EXCEPTIONS TO QUARANTINE AFTER EXPOSURE:

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- Individuals who have previously been infected with COVID-19 within the last 90 days, are not required to quarantine and should monitor for symptoms for the following 14 days after high-risk exposure.
- Fully Vaccinated Individuals are not required to quarantine after high-risk exposure if they remain asymptomatic and should wear mask or face covering and monitor for symptoms for the following 14 days.

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Fully Vaccinated Individuals are those who, at the time of exposure,  $\geq 2$  weeks have past following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series of an FDA-approved vaccine, or  $\geq 2$  weeks have passed following receipt of one dose of a single-dose of an FDA-approved vaccine.

For those individuals that are not required to quarantine after an exposure, whether because they are fully vaccinated or have been previously infected, if symptoms develop within 14 days of the exposure, it is recommended to get tested with an approved COVID-19 molecular assay and remain in isolation if an alternative etiology cannot be readily identified by a healthcare provider.

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## References:

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
2. <https://wcms-wp.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/scientific-brief-options-to-reduce-quarantine.html>
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

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