



**TO:** All Catholic Health Medical Staff and Associates

**FROM:** Kevin Shiley, MD, Medical Director Infection Prevention & Control

**DATE:** August 20, 2020

**RE:** Testing and Isolation update for individuals with prior COVID-19 diagnosis

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SARS-CoV-2 RNA can be found in respiratory specimens collected from people with a history of COVID-19 for many weeks despite the lack of symptoms. In the past, it was unclear if these individuals were still contagious. Current scientific evidence demonstrates that patients with persistent positive COVID-19 tests within 90 days of diagnosis are **NOT** contagious after sufficient time has passed from their initial diagnosis. In light of these findings, the CDC has updated its clinical guidance on testing and isolation for these patients. As a result, Catholic Health is updating its protocols as well. Please contact Infection Prevention & Control if you have any further questions.

**Catholic Health is now advising the following regarding testing:**

- Patients with a prior history of documented COVID-19 *should not* undergo repeat testing within 90 days of their last positive test *unless* it is performed for a regulatory purpose (DOH or executive order) or advised by an infectious disease specialist.

**Infection Control is advising the following regarding the discontinuation of isolation after a COVID-19 diagnosis:**

- Patients with mild to moderate illness<sup>1</sup> who are not severely immunocompromised<sup>2</sup>:
  - At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* **and**
  - At least 24 hours have passed *since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications* **and**
  - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

*Note: For patients who are **not severely immunocompromised** and were **asymptomatic** throughout their infection, Isolation Precautions may be discontinued when at least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test.*

- Patients with severe to critical illness<sup>1</sup> or who are severely immunocompromised<sup>2</sup>:
  - At least 20 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* **and**
  - At least 24 hours have passed *since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications* **and**
  - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

*Note: For patients who are **severely immunocompromised**<sup>2</sup> and were **asymptomatic** throughout their infection, Isolation Precautions may be discontinued when at least 20 days have passed since the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test.*

1. **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, but minimal signs of respiratory distress/hypoxia (no evidence of persistent hypoxia, no substantial or prolonged need for supplemental oxygen therapy)  
**Severe Illness:** Individuals who have new and sustained need for supplemental oxygen to maintain oxygen saturation >93%, or lung infiltrates >50%.  
**Critical Illness:** Individuals who have respiratory failure, septic shock, and/or multiple organ dysfunction.
2. **Severe Immunocompromised:** being on chemotherapy for cancer, untreated HIV infection with CD4 T lymphocyte count < 200, combined primary immunodeficiency disorder, receipt of prednisone >20mg/day for more than 14 days, on transplant immune suppression medications, active hematologic malignancies regardless of chemotherapy

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>