



March 7, 2024

TO: Local Health Departments, Healthcare Providers, Healthcare Facilities, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatric, Adolescent Medicine, Infectious Disease, Primary Care Providers, Nursing Homes, Adult Care Facilities, School Nurses, and Infection Control/Epidemiology

FROM: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)

HEALTH ADVISORY: Updated recommendations on when to stay home and when to go back to normal activities after respiratory illnesses including COVID-19, influenza, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) – Non-Healthcare Settings

Following the [updated CDC recommendations](#), the NYSDOH is revising its guidance for when to stay home and when individuals can return to normal activities after respiratory infections including COVID-19, influenza, and RSV. This [infographic](#) from the CDC is helpful in simply illustrating this respiratory guidance. Please feel free to post in clinical spaces so staff and patients can easily understand this approach for viral respiratory diseases.

- Individuals should stay home and away from others, including people they live with who are not sick, if they have respiratory virus symptoms that are not better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache.
- Individuals can go back to normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both of the following are true:
 - Symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
 - They no longer have a fever without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- When going back to normal activities, individuals should take added precautions over the next 5 days, including taking additional [steps for cleaner air](#), [hygiene](#), [masks](#), [physical distancing](#), and [testing](#) when they will be around other people, especially older adults, young children, and those with weakened immune systems. Children under age 2 should never wear a mask. Healthcare providers should discuss with their patients about how long a child under 2 should stay home.
- Keep in mind that people may still be able to spread the virus that made them sick, even if they are feeling better, so it is important to take extra precautions after resuming normal activities.

- If individuals develop a fever or start to feel worse, they should stay home and away from others again. They should use the same criteria for returning to normal activities as when they first had symptoms and take added precautions over the next 5 days.

These changes described above **DO NOT** pertain to individuals working in healthcare settings. Healthcare facilities should continue to follow the CDC's [Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#) and [Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages](#). Transition from conventional to contingency to crisis staffing strategies should be based on ability to provide essential services, as determined by the facility. Also see: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/02/doh-hcw_rtw_advisory_11_30_22.pdf.

This document supersedes previous guidance on return to normal activities after testing positive for COVID-19 for non-healthcare settings.

Questions about this guidance may be addressed to the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at bcdc@health.ny.gov or call 518-473-4439.