

## Discontinuation of COVID-19 Precautions Guidance

5/2/2020 Updates From Prior Version
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Symptom-based discontinuation rule has been changed from 7 / 3 day to 10 / 3 day criteria</li> <li>2. Added 10 day time-based guidance for patients who test positive for COVID-19 but never had symptoms</li> </ol>

### Summary Table of COVID-19 Discontinuation Rules (For Details, See Text Below)

	Symptom-Based Rule	Test-Based Rule
Brief Description	“10 / 3” day rule	Two negative COVID-19 PCR tests at least 24 hours apart
Applies to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most patients (includes outpatients, discharged patients, and patients transferred to long term care)</li> <li>• Most healthcare workers for return to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients remaining inpatient for care</li> <li>• Patients with prolonged respiratory symptoms that have improved or stabilized (including vented or ECMO patients)</li> <li>• Transfer to some long-term care facilities that require test-based discontinuation</li> <li>• COVID-19+ mothers, prior to visitation with their baby</li> <li>• Patients who need immunocompromising treatment (e.g., transplant, chemotherapy)</li> </ul>

### Background

Detecting viral RNA via PCR does not necessarily mean that live virus is present. In observational studies of hospitalized and nursing home COVID-19 infected patients, live virus has not been detected after 9 days of symptoms despite prolonged RNA fragment shedding ([Wolfel 2020](#); [Arons 2020](#)).

### **For COVID-19 Patients Under Investigation (PUI):**

1. Discontinuation of COVID-19 precautions and transfer from COVID-19/PUI unit are appropriate if:
  - a. Patient has 1 negative COVID-19 test (regardless of test type)  
AND
  - b. There is an alternative diagnosis for the patient's symptoms
2. If there is a patient with undiagnosed illness compatible with COVID-19 (e.g., undifferentiated respiratory illness, compatible symptoms, or concerning radiologic findings), even if COVID-19 test results are negative, add EPIC infection status for "Presumptive COVID-19" and keep patient in COVID-19 unit under COVID-19 precautions until at least the symptom-based discontinuation rule (10/3 day rule) is met.

### **For COVID-19 Positive or Presumptive Positive Patients (Call Infection Control to Remove EPIC Flag Status):**

1. Symptom-Based Rule (preferred in most cases, because of limited testing supply):
  - a. Patient fulfills BOTH criteria:
    - i. 10 days have elapsed since start of patient's symptoms  
  
AND
    - ii. 3 days have elapsed with patient being afebrile without antipyretics and with resolution<sup>a</sup> of respiratory symptoms
  - b. If a patient never had symptoms but tested positive, then in lieu of a symptom-based rule, a time-based rule may be used to discontinue precautions at 10 days from date of first positive COVID-19 test
  - c. Symptom or time-based rules are appropriate for patients being discharged back to the community and for patients being discharged to post-acute care facilities if allowed by the accepting facility

2. Test-Based Rule (Appropriate for certain populations, see below):
  - a. Patient fulfills BOTH criteria:
    - i. Patient is afebrile without use of antipyretics for at least 24 hours, with respiratory symptoms that have improved or stabilized
    - AND
    - ii. Patient has 2 negative COVID-19 tests, at least 24 hours apart
  - b. Recommended patient populations for test-based discontinuation of COVID-19 precautions:
    - i. Patient is having COVID-19 precautions discontinued (to standard precautions) while remaining inpatient for continued care. This includes patients who either remain on a COVID-19 unit or patients who are being transitioned to a non-COVID-19 unit within the hospital.
    - ii. Patients with prolonged respiratory symptoms (including need for indefinite invasive or non-invasive respiratory care) who are being moved from a COVID-19 unit
    - iii. Patients with need for transfer to a post-acute care facility requiring a test-based discontinuation method (depends on individual accepting facility requirements). In this situation, please send testing early in anticipation of discharge, given 24 hour turnaround time of routine COVID-19 test.
    - iv. COVID-19 positive mothers who need clearance prior to visiting their baby in the neonatal ICU
    - v. Patients for whom residual asymptomatic infection would be affected by immunocompromising treatment (e.g., solid organ or hematologic transplant, chemotherapy)

Footnote:

- a. The criteria for resolution of symptoms is stricter than the [CDC guidance](#) that is currently in place for discontinuation of isolation precautions for patients at home and for returning employees.