Discontinuation of COVID-19 Precautions Guidance

5/2/2020 Updates From Prior Version

1. Symptom-based discontinuation rule has been changed from 7 / 3 day to 10 / 3 day criteria
2. Added 10 day time-based guidance for patients who test positive for COVID-19 but never had symptoms

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>Symptom-Based Rule</th>
<th>Test-Based Rule</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applies to</td>
<td>“10 / 3” day rule</td>
<td>Two negative COVID-19 PCR tests at least 24 hours apart</td>
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<td>• Most patients</td>
<td>• Patients remaining inpatient for care</td>
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<td>(includes outpatients, discharged patients, and patients transferred to long term care)</td>
<td>• Patients with prolonged respiratory symptoms that have improved or stabilized (including vented or ECMO patients)</td>
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<td>• Most healthcare workers for return to work</td>
<td>• Transfer to some long-term care facilities that require test-based discontinuation</td>
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<td>• COVID-19+ mothers, prior to visitation with their baby</td>
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<td>• Patients who need immunocompromising treatment (e.g., transplant, chemotherapy)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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 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](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/discontinuing-isolation.html) that is currently in place for discontinuation of isolation precautions for patients at home and for returning employees.