

## DHS Guidance for COVID-19 Isolation and Contact Management Update

### A. Introduction:

This document provides updated guidance for isolation of clients with COVID-19 and management of close contacts to persons with COVID-19. This guidance is adapted from CDC's [Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Homeless Service Sites and in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#) updated on May 11th, 2023.

### B. Definitions:

**Isolation:** separation from others of a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19

**Exposure to COVID-19:** when a person is within 6 feet of someone confirmed with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over 24 hours.

### C. Isolation:

#### C1. When a client tests positive for COVID-19:

- All clients with a COVID-19 positive diagnostic test (rapid antigen or PCR test) should **isolate** regardless of vaccination status. Clients may isolate in their private unit if the client is part of a family unit and is in a unit with private bathroom.
- **All Single Adult clients** residing in shared settings (small dorms, large dorms, and double rooms) **will isolate in a DHS isolation hotel** with daily monitoring by a medical team. They can also choose to isolate in another place of their choosing outside of DHS, such as a relative's home.
- While waiting for a bed and for transportation to an isolation hotel, shelter providers should temporarily isolate clients in a separated room with a door. A designated restroom should be identified and reserved for use by them only during that time. If this is not possible, cleaning after the room has been used by a symptomatic person is essential.
- All clients who test positive for COVID-19 should discuss [treatment options](#) with a medical provider. Clients are more likely to get very sick if they are an older adult or have an underlying medical condition. Treatment should be started within the first few days to be effective.
- **Duration of isolation:**
  - Clients who test positive for COVID-19 isolate for **10 days since symptoms first appeared or from the date of sample collection for the positive test (if asymptomatic)**.
  - Isolation can be **shortened to 7 days if all of the following criteria are met:**
    - ✓ Symptoms are improving, if client was symptomatic
    - ✓ The client has been fever-free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medication),
    - ✓ The client was not hospitalized or doesn't have a weakened immune system.
    - ✓ Tested negative as follows:  
Either a single negative PCR or two negative antigen (rapid or 'home' tests) tests may be used. If using an antigen test, two negative tests must be obtained, one no sooner than day 5 and the second 48 hours later.

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**C1. When a client tests positive for COVID-19 (continued):**

- For people who are moderately or severely immunocompromised or who have severe or critical illness, follow guidance provided by the client's medical provider or consult the DHS Office of the Medical Director.
- Clients who are within 90 days of having had COVID-19, as confirmed by a positive diagnostic test, who subsequently receive a positive PCR test result after their infectious period ended do not need to continue or restart isolation if they do not have new symptoms.
  - A client who is within 90 days of their initial positive test result who becomes symptomatic with an illness that could be COVID-19 should be isolated and linked to a health care provider for evaluation.

**C2. When a client tests positive for COVID-19:**

Clients with COVID-19 symptoms or fever should be tested as soon as possible with a COVID-19 diagnostic test (either rapid antigen or PCR). All clients with COVID-like symptoms should **isolate** regardless of vaccination status. Clients may isolate in their private unit if the client is part of a family unit and is in a unit with private bathroom.

Symptomatic clients who test negative with a rapid antigen test should repeat testing with a second rapid antigen test 48h later or with a PCR test. Clients may leave isolation when their symptoms are improving, and there has been no fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications.

Symptomatic clients who test positive must follow the guidance above, in C1.

**D. Exposure Management****D1. When a client has been exposed:**

All clients of DHS shelters will no longer be required to separate from others after being in close contact with a person who is infectious with COVID-19, that is quarantine is no longer recommended at DHS.

As per [CDC guidance](#), it is recommended that exposed clients follow these recommendations:

- Clients should self-monitor symptoms and report any new symptoms to staff immediately
  - Clients should do a COVID-19 test as soon as possible after exposure to allow for earlier isolation and treatment if indicated. If negative, they should retest on day 5 after exposure regardless of vaccination status.
  - Testing can be done either with one PCR test or two rapid antigen tests. To ensure that a symptomatic client doesn't have COVID, it is recommended to do 2 negative antigen tests for individuals with symptoms or 3 antigen tests for those without symptoms, performed 48 hours apart. A single PCR test can be used to confirm an antigen test result. If using a rapid antigen test, consider also testing on day 7 and 9 after exposure.
  - If a client develops symptoms before the 5 days have passed, they should be isolated and tested right away.

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### **D1. When a client has been exposed:**

- Clients are recommended to wear a well-fitted mask while indoors for 10 full days after exposure, regardless of vaccination status.
- The NYC Health Department or the DHS Office of the Medical Director may provide further recommendations and resources (e.g., testing) as needed.

### **E. Other Considerations**

- Send clients to isolation with their belongings and medications, and as needed, contact DHS for arranging methadone delivery.
- When transporting a resident with COVID-19 or with symptoms of COVID-19, notify all receiving facilities of the resident's COVID-19 status and any additional behavioral health or medical conditions before transport.
- NYC Well staff are available 24/7 and can provide free brief counseling and referrals to care in over 200 languages. Call 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355), text "WELL" to 65173 or chat online by visiting [nyc.gov/nycwell](https://nyc.gov/nycwell).