



HEALTH ADVISORY: WHAT TO DO IF A STUDENT BECOMES SICK Oct. 8, 2020

Background

Schools have re-opened during ongoing community transmission of the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease COVID-19. This advisory provides guidance for healthcare providers on releasing students from isolation, and disease reporting.

Release of a Student from Isolation

We would like to draw your attention to the **"What to do if a Student Becomes Sick at School or Reports a New COVID-19 Diagnosis Flowchart,"** published Sept. 1, 2020, by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). You can reference the guidance [here](#).

After a negative RT-PCR test, a symptomatic student may return to school following existing school illness management policies (for example, when symptoms have improved, and there is no fever for 24 hours).

After a negative rapid antigen test, CDC recommends confirming with an RT-PCR test when the pretest probability is relatively high, especially if the patient is symptomatic or has a known exposure to a person confirmed to have COVID-19. When confirming an antigen test result with a RT-PCR test, it is important that the time interval between collection of samples for the two tests is less than two days, and there have not been any opportunities for new exposures between them. If more than two days separate the two collections, or if there have been opportunities for new exposures, the nucleic acid test should be considered a separate test – not a confirmatory test. Please see **"Interim Guidance for Rapid Antigen Testing for SARS-CoV-2,"** issued Sept. 4, 2020, and accessible [here](#).

Students who have a positive test (antigen or RT-PCR) should isolate until they meet all three criteria for ending home isolation: at least 10 days since symptoms appeared, at least 24 hours fever-free with no fever-reducing medication, and symptoms have improved.

Asymptomatic students who have a negative test (antigen or PCR) can be cleared to return to school. An exception is if they were close contacts to someone with known COVID; close contacts should stay home until 14 days after last exposure and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others at all times, even after a negative test.

For questions or to report a suspected case, please contact:

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