

HEALTH ADVISORY: Updated Guidance for COVID-19 March 19, 2020

HOME ISOLATION

On March 16, the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) issued **“Discontinuation of Home Isolation for Persons with COVID-19 (Interim Guidance),”** accessible [here](#). Options now include both 1) a time-since-illness-onset and time-since-recovery (non-test-based) strategy, and 2) a test-based strategy. Given limited testing availability in our community, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) recommends a non-test-based strategy. This recommendation will prevent most, but may not prevent all instances of secondary spread. The risk of transmission after recovery is likely very substantially less than that during illness.

Persons with COVID-19 who have symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue home isolation under the following conditions:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and,**
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Individuals with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may discontinue home isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.

INFECTION CONTROL

We would also like to draw your attention to the **“Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings,”** issued March 10, 2020 by the CDC. You can reference the guidance [here](#). Key points:

- Based on local and regional situational analysis of PPE supplies, facemasks are an acceptable alternative when the supply chain of respirators cannot meet the demand.
- During this time, available respirators should be prioritized for procedures that are likely to generate respiratory aerosols, which would pose the highest exposure risk to HCP.
- At this time, Metro Health recommends droplet precautions (facemask) for collection of nasopharyngeal swabs in a primary care office setting.

TESTING OF CLOSE CONTACTS OF COVID-19 CASES:

Metro Health will no longer be testing close contacts of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 cases unless individuals are high-risk and hospitalized.

REPORTING OF CASES:

For questions or to report a suspected case, please contact your local health department:

Bexar County Residents:

San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
Epidemiology Program
Phone: (210) 207-8876
Fax: (210) 207-8807