

Press Release

Hamilton County Health Department



Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****
July 22, 2020

Health Department Changes the Isolation Period for Adults with COVID-19 Based on Updated CDC Guidance; Negative Test Results Not Recommended for Employees to Return to Work

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – Accumulated evidence by the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov) supports ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using a symptom-based strategy. As such, the Hamilton County Health Department will now be ending the isolation period for most adults sick with COVID-19 **ten** days after symptom onset **if**:

- The patient has been fever-free at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications (decreased from 72 hours), **and**
- Other symptoms have improved.

For persons who never developed symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days after their first positive RT-PCR test was collected.

Some persons who have had severe COVID-19 illness may still be infectious beyond the 10 day period and therefore may warrant extending their isolation and precautions for up to 20 days after symptom onset. Severe COVID-19 illness generally, but not always, results in hospitalization.

In any case, Health Department infectious diseases specialists review each case and determine the appropriate isolation period and precautions.

Additionally, persons diagnosed with COVID-19 who have recovered and remain asymptomatic are **not** recommended to get retested within 3 months after the symptom onset date. A growing body of data show that, although the COVID-19 virus can be found in recovered patients for weeks, they are not infectious beyond their isolation period.

Public health is also asking providers as you identify cases of COVID-19 infection among your patients to please counsel them to:

- 1) Remain isolated at home throughout their infectious period (a minimum of 10 days from symptom onset), **and**
- 2) Ask them to begin notifying their close contacts of their exposure and recommending close contacts quarantine at home for 14 days following their exposure, **and**
- 3) Be prepared to cooperate when public health calls for contact tracing.

Public health needs your assistance in sharing these important messages to reduce transmission. Strictly adhering to these guidelines will reduce transmission of the disease.

Other best practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community include:

- Wear a mask when out in public, per the [Health Department Directive No. 1](#),
- Follow the social distance guidance provided to all sectors of the economy by the [Tennessee Pledge](#),
- Do not organize or attend large gatherings of people at this time,
- Wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer when unable to wash hands.

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A calendar of testing sites is available on the [Health Department's testing webpage](#).

Visit these additional Health Department COVID-19 resources:

- COVID-19 hotline: (423) 209-8383
- English Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HamiltonTNHealthDept/>
- Spanish Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN/>
- YouTube English: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCkF8VUBQFLiJoxh8Sk10mA>
- YouTube Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwHuLpBFuLOf6hDTCFbfyQ>
- Website: <http://health.hamiltontn.org/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/HamiltonHealth>

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