COVID-19: Isolation, quarantine and the role of testing after a positive test

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Public Health Guidance for Isolation

• Isolation¹
  • Asymptomatic and Positive Test: Isolation for at least 10 days after the first positive test
  • Symptomatic and Positive Test: Isolation until at least 10 days after symptom onset, and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours
  • Severe Illness and Positive Test: Isolation for at least 10 and up to 20 days after symptom onset

• Note: In the eyes of public health authorities, a positive test by PCR is assumed to be a true positive. A second negative test does not change the requirement for isolation; therefore we do not do a “confirmatory” second test. This is consistent with our understanding that COVID-19 is regularly transmitted by asymptomatic positive carriers

¹ Sept 2, 2020
Public Health Guidance for Quarantine

• Quarantine
  • Close contact of known positive, asymptomatic Quarantine for 14 days from last potential exposure; PCR testing, daily self-monitoring for symptoms
  • If test results are negative, continue to quarantine for the full 14 days after last exposure
    • A negative test does not shorten the duration of quarantine per CDC and MA DPH guidance: “The contact is required to quarantine for the full 14 days, even following a negative test result”\(^2\)
After a positive COVID-19 test

• “For persons previously diagnosed with symptomatic COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, retesting is not recommended within 3 months after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection.”¹

• Asymptomatic
  • “For persons who never developed symptoms, the date of first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA should be used in place of the date of symptom onset.”²
  • “These individuals are also not subject to quarantine during this period”²

• If symptoms develop
  • “For persons who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 3 months after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified by a provider, then the person may warrant retesting; consultation with infectious disease or infection control experts is recommended.”¹

References


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