

COVID-19 Response and Reactivation Update

August 18: New Clinical Clearance Guidelines and Immediate Release of Test Results

This twice-weekly communication is intended to facilitate the sharing of important information about the COVID-19 pandemic response and reactivation initiatives across Northwestern Medicine.

Today's issue focuses on changes regarding clinical clearance of COVID-19 patients based on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It also provides information about the immediate release of SARS-CoV-2 virology test results via NM MyChart.

UPDATED CDC RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent data from the CDC indicate that individuals with severe COVID-19 likely remain infectious no longer than 20 days after symptom onset; and 10 days for mild to moderate cases. As a result, the appearance of the COVID-19 flag in Epic for all patients with confirmed COVID-19 will be reduced from 40 to 20 days after a positive test result.

View [Clinical Clearance Guidelines](#) for criteria to clear different types of patients and [COVID-19 Positive Result 20-Day Review BPA tip sheet](#) to reapply COVID-19 precautions if infection is still suspected in ambulatory patients.

If a patient is hospitalized at the time of the flag expiration at 20 days, physicians will see a prompt to reassess the patient's infection status. View a [tip sheet](#) for instructions.

Studies have found that individuals who have recovered from COVID-19 can continue to shed detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA for up to three months after illness onset; however there has been no evidence that recovered patients with low levels of viral RNA are contagious. Therefore, the CDC recommends a symptom-based strategy to end isolation of recovered COVID-19 patients, rather than retesting them.

COVID-19 RESULTS NOTIFICATION

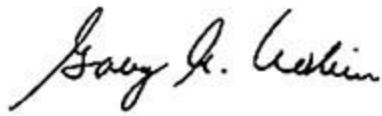
Effective Wednesday, August 19, Northwestern Medicine will begin releasing SARS-CoV-2 virology test results immediately via NM MyChart to patients who have active NM accounts. Patients will likely receive their results prior to physicians or staff review in Epic.

The purpose of this change is to quickly notify patients of results to help prevent spread of COVID-19 within their communities.

When you order or perform a test, please inform patients they will receive their results via NM MyChart and how to interpret them. Remind patients with a high clinical suspicion of COVID-19 that a negative result does not exclude the diagnosis. Also, refer to [COVID-19 dot phrases](#) to remind patients to continue to take precautions to reduce their risk of contracting COVID-19.

Please remember, if members of the media reach out to you for comment or an interview, per [NM's Media Relations Policy](#), refer them to Media Relations at 312.926.7432.

Thank you to all NM physicians and clinicians for your ongoing support, collaboration and dedication to providing exceptional care.



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