

COVID-19 Update

February 25: Update on CDC Quarantine Recommendations, Changes to the Chicago Travel Order and a Special Thank You to Front-Line Heroes

Today's issue features an update on quarantine recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as changes to the City of Chicago Travel Order. Also included is a special thank you to the front-line heroes across Northwestern Medicine.

UPDATE TO CDC QUARANTINE RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the pandemic, quarantine recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been incorporated across Northwestern Medicine to help slow and prevent transmission of COVID-19. Based on available research, the initial quarantine period for those who had been exposed to an individual with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 was 14 days. In December, the CDC introduced recommendations for shortening the quarantine period for most community-based exposures to either:

- 10 days without testing
- Seven days with a negative test result on day five or after

An exception to this recommendation includes asymptomatic individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the previous 90 days.

Recently, the CDC updated its guidelines for community exposures for those who have been fully vaccinated. Vaccinated persons with an exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 are not required to quarantine if they meet all of the following criteria:

- Are fully vaccinated (at least two weeks following receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series, or at least two weeks following receipt of a single-dose vaccine)
- Are within three months following receipt of the last dose in the series
- Have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

Persons who do not meet all three of the above criteria should continue to follow current quarantine guidelines after exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19. Individuals who have been fully vaccinated and who are not required to quarantine should still watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following exposure. If they experience symptoms, they should be clinically evaluated.

Although the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from vaccinated persons is still unknown, vaccination has been shown to prevent symptomatic COVID-19 in many patients. Symptomatic

and pre-symptomatic individuals are thought to have a greater role in transmission than asymptomatic individuals. Avoiding unnecessary quarantine of individuals less likely to spread the virus provides benefits to individuals and society that may outweigh the potential but unknown risk of transmission, and allows for allocation of public health resources to those at highest risk for transmitting SARS-CoV-2. This recommendation to waive quarantine for people with vaccine-derived immunity aligns with quarantine recommendations for those with natural immunity.

Vaccinated individuals must continue to adhere to all recommended protective measures, including wearing a mask and other job-specific personal protective equipment (PPE), maintaining physical distance and practicing hand hygiene.

For more information about PPE guidelines at Northwestern Medicine, visit the [PPE Resources page on Physician Forum](#) or the [PPE Resources page on NM Interactive](#) (login required).

CHANGES TO THE CHICAGO TRAVEL ORDER

On February 23, the [City of Chicago Emergency Travel Order](#) was updated to align with CDC guidelines regarding travel for those who are fully vaccinated.

While NM employees and physicians are still encouraged to postpone domestic travel, especially to states identified as orange on the [City of Chicago Emergency Travel Order state-by-state list](#), the order no longer requires either a 10-day quarantine or negative PCR test for those who live or work in the city if the individual is fully vaccinated. Quarantine and testing still apply for those who are not fully vaccinated.

Please note that patients do not need to be screened for travel history to receive care. According to the order, patients seeking medical care are exempt, including those who are receiving both inpatient and outpatient services.

For additional information, please review the [City of Chicago Emergency Travel Order](#).

THANK YOU, FRONT-LINE HEROES

NM physicians and providers were drawn to health care to make a difference. When the world paused, your commitment never ceased. To the front-line heroes across NM: Thank you! Look for NM front-line heroes during the Golden Globes Award Show on Sunday, February 28. You can also watch the video [here](#).

Thank you for your continued commitment to our *Patients First* mission and heroic care of patients throughout this pandemic.



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