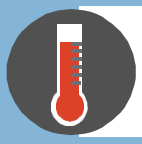
Ohio Department of Health

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE COVID-19

Regardless of Symptoms or Vaccination Status

- Stay home for the next five days regardless of symptoms or vaccination status.
- Stay away from other people as much as possible (including those in your own household).
- If you can't stay away from other people, wear a three-layer (or better) mask.



- Do you have a fever or other symptoms that haven't started to get better on day six?

YES

- Stay home until your fever is gone and other symptoms are better.
- Wear a mask for the next five days.

NO

- Resume activities with a mask.
- Wear a mask for the next five days.

If you are having symptoms of COVID-19 and waiting for your test results, stay home until you get your results.

https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html

Dec. 30, 2021

Mask to Stay Option

Quarantining students at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 has the unintended consequence of reducing in-school learning and can be an added strain on parents, schools, and local health departments (LHDs). While vaccination and mask usage are critical components to ensuring a safe school environment, we offer an in-school alternative to quarantining students and school staff at home who have been exposed to COVID-19 to support in-school learning and reduce the strain.

This recommendation is informed by a growing body of national experience, a pilot in Warren County, and evolution of public health recommendations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on this information, we recommend the following for K-12 students and staff who are returning to a school setting following COVID-19 exposure.

Mask to Stay

Direct contacts, regardless of vaccination or masking status, may remain in the classroom environment if they do the following:

- Wear a mask for 10 days after their last date of exposure.
- Self-monitor, or parent-monitor, for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Isolate and get tested if they start to experience symptoms associated with COVID-19 (regardless of level of severity).

Direct contacts for COVID-19 are those individuals who are identified as being directly exposed to COVID-19 by the positive case. Remember, COVID-19 is a respiratory virus and does not require physical contact to spread. It is spread through sneezing, coughing, talking, and breathing. These factors should be considered when determining level of exposure and direct contacts. Best practice for distancing is 3 ft with everyone masked, 6 ft if the individual is not masked.

Testing on day 5 after exposure is recommended.

Parents and students are responsible for symptom monitoring; however, if nurses/school staff see a child exhibiting symptoms they should act accordingly.

We recognize that some students are unable to wear a mask because of a medical condition or developmental disability as recognized by their medical provider. In these instances, we recommend that LHDs and schools work together to determine if there is a safe way of allowing these students to remain in the school setting. When making this determination, the level of risk and the safety and health of other students must be considered.

To assess whether an unmasked student can safely remain in the classroom setting, consider:

- *The masking policy of the school.*
  - *Universal masking policies reduce the risk of spread.*
  - *The more students who are wearing masks, the less the virus can spread. This reduces risk.*
- *The testing policy of the school.*
  - *Testing is another strategy that schools could choose to implement.*

    - *The more testing a school does, the greater the chance of identifying and isolating positive cases to reduce the risk of infecting others.*
    - *If districts are planning to allow an unmasked student to remain in the classroom setting, the student should be tested daily.*
- *The social distancing strategy of the school.*
    - *Maintaining a distance of 6 feet or more around the exposed and direct contact without a mask reduces risk.*
- *The ability of the student to follow mitigation strategies/behaviors.*
    - *Proper hand hygiene.*
    - *Proper cough etiquette.*
    - *Maintaining personal distance.*
- *Community transmission rates.*
    - *Community transmission rates should be considered.*
    - *High level of transmission rates in communities creates increased risk of transmission within the school environment and a greater chance for outbreaks.*

When used in combination, these strategies provide an increased layer of protection for the exposed direct contact and other students and staff. Layering mitigation strategies including masking, testing, social distancing and appropriate hygiene measures helps reduce the risk of virus spread.