



## Quarantining Your Child for COVID

Quarantine means that someone is isolated from other people for a specific period of time in order to help assure that, if they have a very infectious disease, they won't infect others. Sometimes we know they have an infection and other times we suspect that they may have an infection but are waiting for either a test result or a certain period of time to pass. Quarantine for your child means no school, daycare, babysitter, play dates, work, etc. A quarantined person should stay home and nobody outside of the immediate family should make physical contact with them there.

The rapid COVID-19 antigen test we use has only been studied for patients with 1-5 days of COVID symptoms and is not as accurate as the PCR test that we send to an outside lab. We don't know how well the rapid test performs on children with symptoms for more than 5 days or no symptoms at all, so we cannot say with confidence what a negative result means for those patients. A positive result should reliably mean that your child has an active COVID infection.

Based on information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), here are the quarantine recommendations for COVID-19:

**If your child has a positive COVID test (either rapid or PCR) and symptoms**, they should be quarantined until at least ten days from the day symptoms started and until have had no fever for at least 24 hours and all symptoms are improving. Once they meet those criteria, they are considered no longer contagious, even though subsequent COVID tests may stay positive for weeks to months. Repeat COVID tests are no longer recommended to "clear" someone to end quarantine and return to normal activities.

**If your child has a positive COVID test (either rapid or PCR) and no symptoms and they have not had a previous positive COVID test in the last month**, they should be quarantined for two weeks from the time the test was done, unless they develop symptoms, in which case the paragraph above applies.

**If your child has a negative COVID rapid antigen test, it is recommended that the more accurate PCR test be sent to the lab.** A negative rapid test does not guarantee that your child doesn't have COVID or won't come down with symptoms in the next few days. Your child should remain quarantined until the PCR test result is available. At that time, if the test is negative and your child has no symptoms and has had no significant COVID exposures, they may come out of quarantine. If they had a significant exposure, they should remain quarantined for two weeks after the last day of exposure, even if they have a negative PCR.

**If your child has a negative COVID rapid antigen test and a PCR is not sent**, we don't know how long they should be quarantined, but we do know that the rapid test alone is not sufficient to say your child doesn't have the infection. That's why we send the more accurate PCR test. The chances of your child having COVID are dependent on the degree of their exposure to someone with COVID, the symptoms they might have and the amount of COVID in your community. The more COVID there is in your community, the greater chance there is that the negative rapid test is incorrect. If there was no suspected exposure, your child mostly stays home and he/she has no symptoms, it's far less likely that they might have COVID, but nobody can guarantee that based on the rapid test alone. Under those circumstances, it's not clear if and how long your child should be quarantined. Your child's daycare, school or employer may choose to let them return based on a negative rapid test alone, but that is their decision and not endorsed by AHP or the available science at this time.

**If your child had a significant exposure to COVID** (contact of  $\geq 15$  minutes at less than 6 feet distance, either at one time or cumulatively over 24 hours) they should be quarantined for at least two weeks from the last date of exposure, even if any type of testing is negative during that time.