

Contact: MaryWade Burnside
Public Information Officer
Monongalia County Health Department
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 598-5152 | www.monchd.org
MaryWade.Burnside@wv.gov



For Immediate Release

As omicron cases decline, MCHD reduces COVID isolation guidance

MORGANTOWN, WV (Feb. 7, 2022) — As COVID-19 cases driven by the highly infectious omicron variant continue to trend downward, Monongalia County Health Department has loosened isolation guidance that was emphasized in early January to keep the virus from spreading.

“In an effort to clear some of the confusion generated by multiple recommendations from the government and others, Monongalia County Health Department is pivoting and removing some of the mitigation strategies which have previously served us well but are now deemed unnecessary,” said Dr. Lee B. Smith, medical director.

MCHD is adopting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for isolation and quarantine [see: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>].

An individual who tests positive for COVID-19 will isolate for five days, including isolating from others in the home who have not tested positive.

After five days, if the individual has no fever and symptoms have resolved or greatly improved, then that person may return to work while wearing a well-fitted mask. People who are immunocompromised or have been severely ill from COVID need to continue isolation for the full 10 days.

Quarantine recommendations take into account an individual’s vaccine status. A person who is up to date with vaccines, including all recommended COVID vaccines and boosters received when eligible, does not need to stay home unless symptoms develop.

A person who is unvaccinated or not up to date with COVID-19 vaccines should stay home and quarantine for at least five full days. While at home, the individual should wear a well-fitted mask while around others in the home. Even if these individuals don't develop symptoms, they should get tested for COVID-19 at least five days after exposure before returning to work or resuming normal activities.

“The CDC recommendations do not take into account universal mask mandates, which are currently adopted by the West Virginia Board of Education,” Dr. Smith said. “This allows public schools, preschools and after-school programs or other school programs to follow the state Board of Education recommendations.”

He added: “With a universal mask mandate, as there is in Monongalia County Schools, those individuals exposed, regardless of vaccine status, may resume activities and monitor for symptoms but otherwise have no quarantine requirements.”

These same guidelines, with individuals isolating or quarantining for five days and then returning to work or other activities only if symptoms are resolved or decreasing and while wearing a well-fitted mask and monitoring symptoms for an additional five days, also applies to daycare centers, where the children supervised are often too young to be vaccinated and are therefore more vulnerable.

These decisions are based upon improving numbers of COVID-19 cases in Monongalia County and the state.

“Daily, we look at the number of COVID-19 cases in our county, the numbers of COVID-19 tests done by us, COVID-19 vaccination rates, the numbers of positive cases reported to the state, the number of emergency department visits and hospitalizations and the number of cases in schools, daycares, nursing homes and long-term care facilities,” Dr. Smith said.

He added that MCHD also follows the amount of COVID-19 RNA that is found in sewage treatment plants and compares all results with that of the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, the CDC, the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center and other organizations.

“Fortunately, we are seeing improvement across all these indicators,” Dr. Smith said. “Vaccination rates continue to move forward and it is anticipated that the Pfizer pediatric vaccine for children as young as six months may be approved in the weeks to come.”

However, Dr. Smith noted, these guidelines will only continue as long as cases remain under control.

“Monongalia County Health Department will continue to monitor infection rates and outbreaks and modify recommendations based upon data and best practices,” Dr. Smith said. “We hope that these changes make following COVID-19 community spread prevention easier to understand and follow.

“Public health continues to require community cooperation, as we are all in this together.”

For up-to-date information on health and wellness in Monongalia County, check out monchd.org and follow the health department on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD and on Instagram at #wvmchd.

—30—