

RCAHD Community Update  
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New Isolation and Quarantine Guidance  
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The past two years have been a challenge for all of us, and even as we welcome a new year, the latest headlines reflect this stubbornly persistent pandemic. We continue to find ourselves in difficult times, as cases, hospitalizations, and even deaths rise locally, across Virginia, and around the world. We know that the increased burden of COVID has increased the demand for testing. We are actively working on increasing testing opportunities locally. Visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke/) for the latest updates.

Despite these challenges, we know we are a resilient community. We have the tools to fight this disease. Thanks to the gift of vaccinations (and boosters), as well as masking indoors when in public, maintaining six feet of distance between ourselves and others outside our households, and handwashing- we know what to do.

#### Isolation and Quarantine:

You may have heard that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently updated isolation and quarantine guidelines. What do these guidelines mean for you?

**Isolation:** Regardless of vaccination status, if you test positive:

- Asymptomatic individuals or those with mild symptoms that resolve within 5 days may end isolation on day 5, followed by another 5-day period of strict mask usage when around others.
- Symptomatic individuals, including those with fever or any other symptoms that are not improving by day 5, should remain in isolation until symptoms have improved and/or the fever breaks without the help of fever-reducing medication.

**Quarantine:** If you learn that you have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, the new guidelines for quarantine are:

- People who have had their booster shots (after being fully vaccinated) should commit to a 10-day period of strict mask usage around others.
- Unvaccinated and un-boosted individuals should quarantine for 5 days, followed by another 5 days of strict mask usage.
- All individuals, regardless of vaccination status, should consider getting tested 5 days after the initial exposure. If at any point someone develops symptoms, they should seek testing and isolate pending the test results.

These updates are based on the most recent data which indicates that the majority of COVID-19 transmission takes place earlier after infection, typically in the first 1-2 days before symptoms appear and about 2-3 days after. It is important to note that people can still be contagious and infect others with the virus, even if their symptoms have improved or they had no symptoms, for up to 10 days, which is why it is so important to wear a mask.

We expect more guidance about how these new guidelines will be implemented in places such as schools and daycare centers. Many of our children are not yet vaccinated and younger children may have difficulty adhering to the very strict mask requirements. For these reasons, we recommend that schools and daycares continue their current quarantine and isolation protocols.

Best wishes for a new year of health, happiness, and prosperity.

We can understand that the rise in cases and new information may generate some questions for you. We are holding a virtual Town Hall meeting, Tuesday, January 4 at 7:00p.m. to provide a forum to discuss the latest information and answer any questions. Visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke) for details on how to watch.