

## COVID-19 and Mental Health

Maintaining one's mental health is an essential part of achieving overall well-being. The link below provides resources that will be helpful in connecting individuals with people who can benefit from talking about how they are feeling. There is also information about the virtual support groups and hotlines that are available through various organizations. <https://www.nj211.org/covid-19-and-mental-health>

## COVID-19 Activity

The rate of transmission in NJ has decreased to **0.96**. Any transmission rate above 1.0 is concerning and indicates that each infected person is passing the virus to at least one other person. The higher the number, the greater the risk of viral spread throughout the community. **As of January 15, 2022, five (5) of the six (6) regions of the State are classified as VERY HIGH (RED) COVID Activity, including our Northwest Region. The Southeast Region has fallen into the High (Orange) COVID Activity level.**

For the latest Statewide and Regional COVID Activity Report that specifies the Risk Levels by Region (usually updated by the State each Thursday), please click the following link:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

The rate of new COVID infections in all of the municipalities within the Pequanock Health Department's jurisdiction are stabilizing and in some cases are beginning to fall. However, the number of new daily infections still remains very high. Projections indicate that a sharp decline in new cases is expected within the next week or so.

The spread of COVID is largely driven by a combination of the following factors:

- Many within the population who remain **unvaccinated or without booster shots**
- COVID outbreaks involving the highly contagious Omicron variant which is well over twice as contagious than the Delta variant, and now accounts for over 90% of all sequenced COVID infections in the United States.
- Breakthrough Infections among the vaccinated. The vaccines are safe and while only marginally effective against infection from the highly contagious and more mild Omicron variant, they are highly effective in **protecting against severe illness, hospitalization, and death.**
- Lifted or relaxed restrictions and diminished practice of protective precautions
- More indoor congregating in less ventilated spaces during colder winter weather.

Please see the **links below for the NJDOH COVID Activity Dashboard, the NJ Regional COVID Activity Reports and the links to the Morris and Passaic County Health Department COVID Websites.** Morris County links include daily updates of cumulative numbers of cases by municipality and the COVID Activity and Risk Level in each of the State's six regions.

NJDOH Dashboard:

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_dashboard.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml)

Statewide and Regional COVID Activity Report and Risk Level by Region:

<https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/statistics/covid/>

Morris County-Based COVID Information including Data for Total Positive Cases by Municipality and COVID Testing Availability:

<https://health.morriscountynj.gov/coronavirus/>

Passaic County-Based COVID Information including Testing Availability:

<https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/health/covid-19>

## **The Omicron Variant**

In regards to the Omicron variant, early studies and the available information indicates that it is well over twice as contagious as the Delta variant and possibly as contagious as measles. Omicron is outcompeting and has actually replaced the Delta variant in the U.S., just as it has in South Africa, the U.K. and in other parts of Europe.

Omicron is present in all 50 U.S. states. **Omicron has replaced Delta** as the dominant strain in the U.S. and is on the way to doing so, globally. Several studies indicate that **omicron is not only extremely contagious, but produces more mild illness in most people when compared to the previous variants**. The hope is that in the best case scenario, Omicron will continue to smother out and replace the Delta variant and other emerging variants. This **could in effect end the pandemic** and leave us with another coronavirus similar to the four endemic coronaviruses that now circulate the globe and only produce symptoms very similar to that of the common cold. While it is still **too early to say definitively**, there is reason to feel some level of optimism based on the mounting evidence and information now available.

The most important thing you can do to protect yourself from the Delta and Omicron variants is to **get fully vaccinated and get your booster shot**. Studies indicate that the Pfizer mRNA and the Moderna mRNA vaccine, have some effectiveness, though substantially diminished, against Omicron infection. However, studies have also shown that vaccination, and especially third shot boosters, provide **strong protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death**.

## **Use of Masks and Other Important Safety Precautions**

### **Masks**

Please see the link below to the CDC recommendation for the use of masks indoor for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals when regional transmission is substantial or high. There is now a sustained very high (red) level of community transmission within our region of NJ. Projections indicate sustained rates of infection from the highly contagious, quickly sweeping Omicron variant for some time, though decreases in cases are beginning to be observed.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

## Who Should Wear a Mask?

- People, including children older than 2, should wear a mask in indoor public places if they are:
  - Not fully vaccinated
  - Fully vaccinated and in an area with substantial or high transmission
  - Fully vaccinated and with weakened immune systems
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
  - In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others who are not fully vaccinated.

## Other Important Precautions

These precautions will help to protect against both **the flu** and **Omicron**, the **most contagious COVID variant to date**:

- Get vaccinated!
- Get boosted!
- Distancing six or more feet
- Wearing masks/face coverings when appropriate, as described above
- Keep indoor spaces well ventilated to the greatest extent possible
- Practicing hand hygiene
- Avoiding touching the eyes, nose or mouth
- Disinfecting commonly touched surfaces
- Staying home when symptomatic
- Get tested when appropriate
- Following all of the requirements and advisories set forth in the Executive Orders, Executive Directives and Travel Advisories.
- Adhering to isolation and quarantine recommendations and orders from the Health Department's contact tracers and disease investigators.
- Strengthen the immune system by:
  - Getting good nutrition. Consult your healthcare provider about supplementing with Vitamin D, Vitamin C, and zinc
  - Getting enough sleep
  - Exercising
  - Maintaining mental health
  - Keeping on schedule with healthcare visits

## COVID-19 Testing Options

➤ **NO-COST COVID TESTING IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ALL NEW JERSEY RESIDENTS!**

New Jersey and Vault Medical Services have teamed up to offer at-home COVID-19 saliva testing for any person who believes they need to be tested, with or without symptoms, at no cost.

- [Order a free saliva-based PCR test, shipped directly to your home at no cost.](#)
- [Find a list of free, public testing sites, including pop-up testing sites.](#)

### ➤ **Morris County**

Morris County and the County College of Morris is again collaborating with the Morris County Sheriff's Office to operate the testing facility at the **County College of Morris Student Center**, where the county operated its testing center last year. Instead of a saliva test, the center is employing the LabQ Diagnostics nasal-swab PCR tests. The site opened on Monday January 10, 2022. Testing is available **by appointment only**. No one will be permitted to walk into the facility without an appointment, and appointments must be scheduled on-line through the [Morris County COVID-19 Information website](#).

People who schedule a test will not be charged for the service, but will be asked to provide information about whether they have health insurance, Medicaid, Medicare or no healthcare coverage. Individuals with symptoms or who have a known exposure to COVID-19 should follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines for isolation or quarantine until they receive their test results.

#### Directions and Precautions

Parking at CCM for people with appointments will be reserved in Lot 6, where individuals using public transportation to and from CCM also may board or disembark from a bus. To find directions to CCM and learn more about public transportation options to and from the campus, please go to the CCM [website](#).

Everyone arriving at the campus is required to wear a protective face covering or mask from the time of arrival in the parking lot to the moment of departure.

For more information, please see the Morris County website at <https://www.morriscountynj.gov/Residents/Health/Coronavirus/Get-a-Covid-19-Test>

Please monitor the COVID-19 information page on the Morris County [website](#) to learn of any changes in the testing schedule at CCM or updates on other testing programs and the pandemic.

### ➤ **Passaic County**

Passaic County offers At-home and Mobile COVID-19 PCR testing at no cost to people who want to be tested.

Details may be found at <https://www.passaiccountynj.org/departments/health/covid-19>

### ➤ **Atlantic Health System**

As COVID-19 and the Omicron variant continue to impact our community, **Atlantic Health System** has offered to share important information about how and where to get tested.

To ensure all patients seeking immediate medical care receive the highest level of attention, we are reminding patients **with no symptoms or minor symptoms to refrain from using the emergency department solely as a means to get testing**. Please **do not** use the emergency department at any hospital as a COVID testing facility, unless you are experiencing severe symptoms or need emergency medical care. If you are experiencing severe symptoms, please contact your doctor, dial 911 or visit the emergency department. If you suspect you've been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing mild to moderate symptoms, please consider one of Atlantic Health System's dedicated testing locations or other community testing sites listed on the following link:

<https://www.atlantichealth.org/conditions-treatments/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-testing.html>

Choosing between a COVID-19 PCR or antigen test can be confusing. Atlantic Health has created the attached graphic to help you choose the right test option for you and your family. COVID-19 testing is available for patients with or without symptoms at specific Atlantic Health locations. Find a community lab, testing center or urgent care testing location near you: <https://bit.ly/3uQ9HEI>

Booster shots are the best way to improve your protection against COVID-19, and help prevent severe disease. Please see the attached graphic that clearly illustrates booster eligibility. To learn more about booster eligibility and where to get one: [bit.ly/3qC2rfN](https://bit.ly/3qC2rfN)

➤ **Additional Local Testing Site (not listed on the NJDOH website).**

Doctor's Urgent Care

Pompton Plains, NJ

<https://www.njdoctorsurgentcare.com/>

### **Updated COVID-19 Vaccination Information**

➤ **Get Your Booster Shot As Soon As Possible!**

### **Booster Shots for All Three Vaccines are Approved and are Highly Effective in Preventing Severe Illness, Hospitalization and Death for all Variants, Including Omicron**

The CDC has recommended boosters for all three vaccines be made available and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has amended the emergency use authorization (EUA) for the **Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine** and the **Moderna mRNA vaccine**, to be administered as a single booster dose **at least six months** after completion of the primary series. The authorization also applies to the **J&J Janssen vaccine**, to be administered as a single booster dose **at least two months** after the primary shot.

Those who are **eligible** include the following:

- individuals 18 years of age and older;
- Individuals who are 16 to 17 years of age are now eligible under an FDA authorization and CDC recommendation as of December 10<sup>th</sup> for Pfizer boosters.

Individuals 18+ may choose any of the vaccines to serve as their booster, as mixing and matching is considered acceptable. For more information from the CDC about the COVID boosters, please click on the following link:

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/p1021-covid-booster.html>

➤ **CDC Recommends a Third Dose of COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines for those who are Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised**

CDC has recommended that people whose immune systems are moderately to severely compromised should receive an additional dose of mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer or Moderna) at least 28 days after the second dose of [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#) or [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#) or an additional dose of **J&J Janssen vaccine** at least two months after the primary dose.

People should consult with their healthcare provider about their medical condition, and whether getting an additional dose is appropriate for them. As with the mRNA two-dose series and the single dose of J&J Janssen, [serious side effects are rare](#), but may occur.

➤ **Get Vaccinated! For those who are Unvaccinated, Getting Vaccinated will Give a High Level of Protection to your Family, Friends and Community. An Abundance of Appointments are Available, It's Quick and Easy!**

The vaccine is **highly effective** in protecting against infection and even more so from severe illness, hospitalization, and death. The impact of the pandemic on every sector of our society has been devastating. These impacts have included increased rates of suicide, drug addiction, alcoholism, depression, emotional and psychological distress, among other negative economic and societal impacts. **The quicker this pandemic is eradicated, the quicker our nation will heal and grow. The greatest way to do this, is through vaccination.**

“Fully vaccinated” still means two-doses of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or one dose of J and J vaccine and a booster is not required to be considered fully vaccinated, at this time. However, booster shots are strongly recommended. It will take at least a two-week period after the first shot of J and J or the second shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine to provide the maximum level of immunity. It is the same timeframe with the booster shots. Whether or not you are vaccinated, it's important to follow CDC prevention guidelines that are available for [vaccinated](#) and [unvaccinated](#) people.

All three vaccines authorized in the United States are available to everyone 18 and older. Those 5 to 17 years old are only authorized to receive an age-appropriate dose of [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#).

➤ **There are Multiple Ways to Get Vaccinated. Appointment Based or Walk-up clinics are Now Easily Accessible**

- For up-to-date vaccine locations in New Jersey, please visit [covid19.nj.gov/finder](https://covid19.nj.gov/finder).

➤ **Chain Pharmacies, Healthcare Systems and Other Outlets have Enough Vaccine to Meet the Demand. Vaccine Supply is Plentiful and Appointments are Easy to Get. Please Get Vaccinated!**

- Many Healthcare Systems and Chain pharmacies, such as CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, Walmart are now welcoming **walk-ins**.

➤ **Atlantic Health System Vaccination Centers**

- Atlantic Health System Vaccination Centers may continue to be open for limited hours in Clark, Hackettsown, Morristown, Mountain Lakes, Newton and Pompton Plains.
- Go to the following link to make an appointment: [atlanticealth.org/covidvaccine](https://atlanticealth.org/covidvaccine) . Walk-ins may be permitted at select locations on certain days. Additional COVID-19 information and vaccine updates from Atlantic Health System are also available on their webpage.

➤ **Passaic County COVID-19 Vaccination Sites**

Passaic County has identified vaccination centers for the eligible priority groups. Most of these sites are **not** restricted to Passaic County residents. Appointments are suggested but walk-ins are welcome.

For vaccination updates in Passaic County, go to:

[https://www.passaiccountynj.org/government/departments/health/current\\_health\\_alerts.php](https://www.passaiccountynj.org/government/departments/health/current_health_alerts.php)

For more information on the progress of New Jersey's vaccination program, please follow these links: <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine> and for the NJDOH COVID Dashboard:

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_dashboard.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_dashboard.shtml)

**Definition of Close Contact to a COVID Positive Individual**

The New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) has established criteria for what constitutes a “Close Contact” to someone who is a COVID-19 positive individual. It is defined as – **“a total of 15 minutes or more of close contact exposure (6 feet or closer) to an infected person during a 24-hour period”**. Those who have been determined to be a close contact to a COVID -19 positive individual should **quarantine for a minimum period as set forth in the Quarantine and Isolation Protocol Section below**.

In **classroom settings in K through 12 schools**, criteria for what constitutes a “Close Contact” is “a total of 15 minutes or more of close contact exposure (**3 feet or closer**) to an infected person during a 24-hour period”. K thru 12 schools have specific guidance unique to those institutions regarding quarantine isolation and exclusion. The NJDOH guidance and recommendations specific to K thru 12 schools should be consulted. The guidance is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_schools.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml)

## Quarantine and Isolation Protocols from the NJDOH and the CDC

For Those Who've Tested Positive (Isolation) or Those who've been Exposed to Someone Who Tested COVID Positive (Quarantine)

### ➤ Quarantine

Quarantine is a strategy used to prevent transmission of COVID-19 by keeping people who have been in [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 apart from others.

### Who does not need to quarantine?

If you had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and you are in one of the following groups, you **do not need to quarantine**.

- You are [up to date](#) with your COVID-19 vaccines.
- You had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (meaning you tested positive using a [viral test](#)).

You should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0). [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19. If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the [Isolation](#) section below. If you tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered and remain without COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine or get tested after close contact. You should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 10 days from the date of your last close contact with someone with COVID-19 (the date of last close contact is considered day 0).

### Who should quarantine?

If you come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, you should quarantine if you are not [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines. This includes people who are not vaccinated.

### What to do for quarantine:

- Stay home and away from other people for at least 5 days (day 0 through day 5) after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. The date of your exposure is considered day 0. Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home, if possible.
- For 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19, watch for fever (100.4°F or greater), cough, shortness of breath, or other [COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If you develop symptoms, [get tested](#) immediately and isolate until you receive your test results. If you test positive, follow [isolation](#) recommendations.
- If you do not develop symptoms, [get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

- If you test negative, you can leave your home, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when around others at home and in public until 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you test positive, you should isolate for at least 5 days from the date of your positive test (if you do not have symptoms). If you do develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days from the date your symptoms began (the date the symptoms started is day 0). Follow recommendations in the [isolation](#) section below.
- If you are unable to get a test 5 days after last close contact with someone with COVID-19, you can leave your home after day 5 if you have been without [COVID-19 symptoms](#) throughout the 5-day period. Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) for 10 days after your date of last close contact when around others at home and in public.
- Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19, as well as others outside your home throughout the full 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you are unable to quarantine, you should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) for 10 days when around others at home and in public.
- If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to quarantine for 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- Do not travel during your 5-day quarantine period. Get tested at least 5 days after your last close contact and make sure your test result is negative and you remain without symptoms before traveling. If you don't get tested, delay travel until 10 days after your last close contact with a person with COVID-19. If you must travel before the 10 days are completed, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel during the 10 days. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until after 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.

## After quarantine

- Watch for symptoms until 10 days after your last close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- If you have symptoms, isolate immediately and [get tested](#).

## ➤ Isolation

Isolation is used to separate people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 from those without COVID-19. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, or wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when they need to be around others. People in isolation should stay in a specific "sick room" or area and use a separate bathroom if available. Everyone who has presumed or confirmed COVID-19 should stay home and isolate from other people for at least 5 full days (day 0 is the first day of symptoms or the date of the day of the positive viral test for asymptomatic persons). They should wear a mask when around others at home and in public for an additional 5 days. People who are confirmed to have

COVID-19 or are showing symptoms of COVID-19 need to isolate regardless of their vaccination status. This includes:

- People who have a [positive viral test](#) for COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they have [symptoms](#).
- People with [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, including people who are awaiting test results or have not been tested. People with symptoms should isolate even if they do not know if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19.

## What to do for isolation

- Monitor your [symptoms](#). If you have an [emergency warning sign](#) (including trouble breathing), seek emergency medical care immediately.
- Stay in a separate room from other household members, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- Take steps to [improve ventilation at home](#), if possible.
- Avoid contact with other members of the household and pets.
- Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels, and utensils.
- Wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you need to be around other people.

Learn more about [what to do if you are sick](#) and [how to notify your contacts](#).

## Ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms

If you had COVID-19 and had [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. To calculate your 5-day isolation period, day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- You can end isolation after 5 full days if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation).
- You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of your 5-day isolation period. If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for a full 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If you continue to have fever or your other symptoms have not improved after 5 days of isolation, you should wait to end your isolation until you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved. Continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#). Contact your healthcare provider if you have questions.
- Do not travel during your 5-day isolation period. After you end isolation, avoid travel until a full 10 days after your first day of symptoms. If you must travel on days 6-10, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days.

- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until a full 10 days after your first day of symptoms.

If an individual has access to a test and wants to test, the best approach is to use an [antigen test](#)<sup>1</sup> towards the end of the 5-day isolation period. Collect the test sample only if you are fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms have improved (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). If your test result is positive, you should continue to isolate until day 10. If your test result is negative, you can end isolation, but continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10. Follow additional recommendations for masking and restricting travel as described above.

**Please Note:** These recommendations on ending isolation **do not** apply to people with moderate or severe COVID-19 or with weakened immune systems (immunocompromised). See section below for recommendations for when to end isolation for these groups.

### **Ending isolation for people who tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms**

If you test positive for COVID-19 and never develop [symptoms](#), isolate for at least 5 days. Day 0 is the day of your positive viral test (based on the date you were tested) and day 1 is the first full day after the specimen was collected for your positive test. You can leave isolation after 5 full days.

- If you continue to have no symptoms, you can end isolation after at least 5 days.
- You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others at home and in public until day 10 (day 6 through day 10). If you are unable to wear a mask when around others, you should continue to isolate for 10 days. Avoid people who are [immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease](#), and nursing homes and other high-risk settings, until after at least 10 days.
- If you develop [symptoms](#) after testing positive, your 5-day isolation period should start over. Day 0 is your first day of symptoms. Follow the recommendations above for [ending isolation for people who had COVID-19 and had symptoms](#).
- Do not travel during your 5-day isolation period. After you end isolation, avoid travel until 10 days after the day of your positive test. If you must travel on days 6-10, wear a [well-fitting mask](#) when you are around others for the entire duration of travel. If you are unable to wear a mask, you should not travel during the 10 days after your positive test.
- Do not go to places where you are unable to wear a mask, such as restaurants and some gyms, and avoid eating around others at home and at work until 10 days after the day of your positive test.

### **Ending isolation for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised)**

People who are severely ill with COVID-19 (including those who were hospitalized or required intensive care or ventilation support) and people with [compromised immune systems](#) might need to isolate at home longer. They may also require testing with a [viral test](#) to determine when they can be

around others. CDC recommends an isolation period of at least 10 and up to 20 days for people who were severely ill with COVID-19 and for [people with weakened immune systems](#). Consult with your healthcare provider about when you can resume being around other people.

People who are immunocompromised should talk to their healthcare provider about the potential for reduced immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines and the need to continue to follow [current prevention measures](#) (including wearing a [well-fitting mask](#), [staying 6 feet apart from others](#) they don't live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) to protect themselves against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider. Close contacts of immunocompromised people – including household members – should also be encouraged to receive all [recommended COVID-19 vaccine doses](#) to help protect these people.

The NJDOH Communicable Disease Service has also updated **COVID-19 Public Health Recommendations for Local Health Departments for K-12 Schools**. This information is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_schools.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml)

### **Contact Tracing and Disease Investigation**

The NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) has provided additional contact tracers to our local Health Department from the State work force. They support the operation while under the direction of the Pequannock Health Department's nurse supervisors.

### **School and University Operations While Addressing COVID Outbreaks**

The Pequannock Health Department is working closely with these institutions to contact trace, investigate, isolate, and quarantine individuals to quickly contain any spread of the COVID-19 virus that may be identified within these institutions. Many institutions of higher learning are requiring students to be fully COVID Vaccinated in order to be permitted on campus. Pfizer has received an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) from the FDA to allow vaccinations of those who are 5 years of age and up. Other vaccines are undergoing clinical trials for those under 18 and may soon also receive an EUA from the FDA. State vaccination mandates for students under 18 years of age are **not** expected, at this time. K thru 12 schools have specific guidance unique to these institutions is available on the COVID-19 Information for Schools website at [https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019\\_schools.shtml](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/topics/covid2019_schools.shtml).

### **Attendance at Gatherings**

All individuals, whether vaccinated or not, should consider the following precautions:

- [Wear a mask](#) when appropriate, wash your hands, practice social distancing, and stay home if you are sick.
- Indoor gatherings are particularly dangerous places for the virus to spread. Host outdoor activities rather than indoor activities as much as possible.
- If you do host indoors, increase ventilation by opening windows and doors or by placing central air and heating on continuous circulation rather than recirculated air.

- The smaller the gathering is, the less likely it is that someone is infected and put loved ones at risk.
- Require guests to wear masks when not eating, whether indoors or in crowded outdoor areas.
- Delay travel based on CDC guidance. For more information, refer to the [CDC's guidance for domestic travel](#).
- Guests should avoid direct contact, including handshakes and hugs, with others outside their household.
- Make hand sanitizer available for guests.
- Gatherings that last longer pose more risk than shorter gatherings.
- Remind guests to wash their hands before serving or eating food.
- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use when feasible.
- Consider keeping a list of guests who attended for potential future contact tracing needs. If you are called by a contact tracer, it's critical that you answer the call to protect us all. Your help is the key to stopping the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives.

Data suggests the Omicron variant is far more transmissible, even among vaccinated individuals, than all other COVID variants to date. **Face masks are strongly recommended for both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in indoor settings** where there is an increased risk, especially when the region of the State is classified to have a **substantial or high COVID risk**.

As no vaccine is 100% effective, people must balance preventive actions to reduce possible transmission and maintain safety. People who have a weakened immune system should discuss whether they should continue precautions with their healthcare provider. The combination of COVID-19 vaccination and [continued precautions to protect yourself and others](#) will offer the best protection from getting and spreading COVID-19.

## **Travel**

While the NJDOH has lifted its travel advisory for travel, the CDC travel guidelines are still recommended for domestic and international travel.

Travelers and residents returning from any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) should follow the [recommendations from the CDC](#).

It is **strongly recommended** that international travelers and residents who have returned to the U.S. from foreign countries follow the [recommendations from the CDC](#).

For more CDC/NJDOH Travel Advisory Information please follow the links below:

NJDOH

<https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

CDC

## **Health & Safety Recommendations For Businesses and Workplaces**

*Last Updated: 09/21/2021*

The NJ Department of Health has issued industry-specific health and safety recommendations for:

- [Amusement Parks, Arcades, and Playgrounds](#)
- [Bars and Restaurants](#)
- [Gyms](#)
- [Personal Care Services](#)
- [Pools and Aquatic Facilities](#)

General public health and safety recommendations that businesses and workplaces might consider to better protect employees and customers:

- Businesses are encouraged to follow [CDC safety guidelines and social distancing](#) to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Masks are not required for most indoor workplaces, however businesses should encourage unvaccinated employees, customers, and guests to wear masks.
- If masks or gloves are required by employers, businesses are encouraged to provide them to employees
- Businesses are encouraged to provide approved sanitization materials for employees and visitors at no cost to those individuals
- Employees should practice hand hygiene and employers should provide employees with sufficient break time for that purpose
- Routine cleaning and disinfection of all high-touch areas is encouraged in accordance with DOH and [CDC guidelines](#)
- Conduct daily health checks, such as temperature screenings, visual symptom checking, self-assessment checklists, and/or health questionnaires, consistent with CDC guidance, prior to each shift
- Employers are encouraged to keep sick employees from entering the workplace and follow requirements of applicable leave laws
- Encourage sick employees to stay home
- Employers should promptly notify employees of any known exposure to COVID-19 at the worksite

Businesses have the right to require stricter mask policies, but businesses are not allowed to restrict the use of face masks by their staff, customers, or visitors. Municipalities and counties are also permitted to impose stricter requirements on masking in businesses open to the public.

Social distancing, masking, and other safety measures are still required in high-risk areas such as [healthcare settings](#), [public transportation](#), [child care centers](#), [correctional facilities](#), and homeless shelters.

For more safety tips, refer to the [CDC's COVID-19 Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#).

## **Executive Orders**

### **Executive Order 283-Governor Murphy Directs Vaccination and Booster Requirements for Healthcare and Other Congregate Care Settings**

Covered positions and settings must comply with primary vaccination series by mid-February and with boosters by March 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **Executive Order 281-Governor Murphy Re-instates Executive Orders**

Executive Order Nos. 251, 252, 253, 264, and 271 (2021) shall remain in full force and effect.

### **Executive Order 280-Governor Murphy Re-instates Public Health State of Emergency**

Public Health State of Emergency has been re-instated to assure resources and responses at the highest possible level are immediately available.

### **Executive Order 271-Governor Murphy Directs Vaccination or Testing Requirements for All State Contract Employees**

All State contract employees must maintain a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof to the covered setting that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times weekly. This order is effective immediately.

### **Executive Order 264-Governor Murphy Directs Vaccination or Testing Requirements for All Childcare Center Personnel**

All Childcare Centers must maintain a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof to the covered setting that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times weekly. This requirement shall take effect on November 1, 2021, at which time any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof that they are fully vaccinated must submit to a minimum of weekly or twice weekly testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

### **Executive Order 253-Governor Murphy Directs Vaccination or Testing Requirements for All Preschool to Grade 12 Personnel and for All State Workers**

All State workers and All public, private, and parochial preschool programs, and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools (“covered settings”), must maintain a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof to the covered setting that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times weekly. This requirement shall take effect on October 18, 2021 at which time any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof that they are fully vaccinated must submit to a minimum of weekly or twice weekly testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

### **Executive Order 252-Governor Murphy Directs Vaccination Requirements in Health Care Facilities and High-Risk Congregate Settings**

Covered health care and high-risk congregate settings must maintain a policy that requires covered workers to either provide adequate proof that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-

19 testing at minimum one to two times weekly. This requirement shall take effect on September 7, 2021, at which time any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof that they are fully vaccinated must submit to weekly or twice weekly testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

### **Executive Order 251-Governor Murphy Announces Mask Requirements for the beginning of the 2021/2022 School Year**

All public, private, and parochial preschool programs and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools (collectively “school districts”), must maintain a policy regarding mandatory use of face masks by staff, students, and visitors in the indoor portion of the school district premises, except in certain circumstances, as specified in the Order.

*Please note, Executive Orders may be issued by the Governor at any time to establish or relax restrictions on certain businesses, social activities and gatherings. For up to date and more complete information, please refer to the entire contents of the Executive Orders and Executive Directives listed at the links below.*

**Please see the link below for all Executive Orders to date:**

[https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo\\_archive.shtml](https://nj.gov/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.shtml)

**Please see the link below for an up to date list of Executive Directives of the NJDOH:**

<https://www.state.nj.us/health/legal/covid19/>