# PHMDC: Public Health adopts new COVID-19 quarantine and isolation guidance

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Following updated COVID-19 recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) and from the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services](#) (DHS), Public Health Madison & Dane County is adopting [new guidelines](#) for the length of isolation and quarantine.

According to the guidance, the time for isolation following a positive COVID-19 test is now five days, followed by five days of wearing a mask when around others. Individuals can stop isolating after five days as long as their symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours. The CDC states that the latest science shows that the majority of COVID transmission generally happens in the 1-2 days before the start of symptoms and the 2-3 days after.

Public Health is also updating the recommended quarantine period for those exposed to COVID-19 to align with the new CDC guidance. Individuals who are either unvaccinated or individuals who are [due for a booster](#) but have not yet received one, will now need to quarantine for five days, followed by five days of wearing a mask when around others. Fully vaccinated or boosted individuals do not need to quarantine, instead must wear a mask around others for 10 days since the last known contact and get a test on day 5, if possible.

"If you are identified as a close contact but have recently been vaccinated or boosted, not only are you more protected against severe illness, you may also not

need to quarantine," said Janel Heinrich, Director of Public Health Madison & Dane County. "The bottom line is, it's never too late to get a vaccine or to get your booster, as the Omicron variant is spreading quickly in our community and vaccination is protective against severe outcomes."

As of December 20, nearly 150 Omicron cases had been identified in Dane County, which is 50 times higher than the number just four days prior. Given the highly transmissible nature of Omicron, we assume the number is far higher today. Dane County is also currently experiencing a high number of COVID cases overall, with the 7-day average coming in at 385 cases per day.

"We are seeing the highest case rates we have experienced so far in 2021, and our contact tracing team is working hard to reach as many people as possible," said Hester Wolfe, COVID-19 Disease Control Supervisor. "However, there is no guarantee we will be able to reach everyone. We strongly recommend that you isolate and notify your close contacts of your positive test result as soon as possible."

Public Health implores everyone to follow this updated guidance, continue to wear a well-fitting mask indoors, avoid crowded indoor spaces, and when in doubt about exposure, get tested. There are many testing options in Dane County, however, with post-holiday testing demand as high as it is, stay home until you are able to get a test.

For more information about COVID-19 in Dane County visit publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus. You can also follow @publichealthmdc on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.