



MISSISSIPPI STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MSDH Guidance for Discontinuation of Isolation and Transmission-Based Precautions in Patients with COVID-19

There have been many questions surrounding symptom-based versus test-based strategies for individuals with COVID-19 regarding the discontinuation of transmission-based precautions in healthcare settings, discontinuation of isolation for persons not in healthcare settings, and return to work for healthcare providers and others deemed critical or essential.

The Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) recommends a **time and symptom-based strategy** for the discontinuation of isolation and transmission-based precautions for patients with COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recently provided supporting evidence for a symptom-based strategy available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/strategy-discontinue-isolation.html> . In summary,

- Replication-competent virus has not been successfully cultured more than 9 days after illness, with a statistically estimated likelihood of recovering replication-competent approaching zero by 10 days;
- No clear correlation has been described between length of illness and duration of post-recovery shedding of detectable viral RNA in upper respiratory specimens.

Time and Symptom-based Strategy

For current inpatients and for those being discharged to a long-term care, nursing home or other facility, and for individuals not in healthcare settings, MSDH recommends that transmission-based precautions and isolation remain in place until:

- The patient has been fever-free for at least 72 hours (without the use of antipyretics) with improvement of symptoms, **and**
- At least 14 days have passed since the onset of illness (or 14 days since date of test collection if the patient was asymptomatic).

Return to Work

Individuals deemed critical or essential, including healthcare providers, who have been fever-free for 72 hours (without the use of antipyretics) and for whom at least 10 days have passed since the onset of illness, may be allowed to return to work prior to the end of the 14 days isolation period while wearing a mask if their employer approves. They are otherwise to remain isolated at home for the full 14-day period.

Cases of COVID-19 are placed on an MSDH Health Officer Order for Home Isolation that outlines the above time and symptom-based strategy for release from isolation and potential return to work.

Test-based Strategy

MSDH does not recommend a test-based strategy to discontinue isolation, to discharge from a hospital, or to return to work for any infected individual.