This document provides guidance for screening, testing, personal protective equipment (PPE), and transmission precautions for SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 in ambulatory care settings.

KEY UPDATE

- In order to discontinue isolation for MODERATELY OR SEVERELY IMMUNOCOMPROMISED patients with confirmed COVID-19, TWO NEGATIVE SARS-CoV-2 tests (molecular assays, e.g. PCR) are required. This is a new change (based on changes in CDC guidance) from prior guidelines that only required repeat testing for severely (not moderately) immunocompromised patients. See TABLE FOOTNOTE 4 for a list of conditions and treatments considered to represent a moderately or severely immunocompromised state.

- For all other patients on isolation for confirmed COVID-19, repeat SARS-CoV-2 testing continues to not be required in order to discontinue isolation (see Table 1 for time and symptom criteria).

- All patients and visitors must don a well-fitting surgical mask upon arrival. See Use of Face Coverings and PPE by Patients and Visitors for more details.

- For patient and visitor screening information see Screening Tool for Patients and Visitors.

- For guidance on discontinuing COVID-19 isolation precautions, see Discontinuing Transmission-Based Precautions for Patients with Confirmed COVID-19.

**Figure 1: COVID-19 Screening Algorithm for Ambulatory Settings**

**SCREEN** all patients PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT (during scheduling/reminder calls) and UPON ARRIVAL for:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
  - See Table 1 for testing guidance for SARS-CoV-2
- Diagnosis of COVID-19 within past 10 days
- Exposure to COVID-19 within past 10 days and NOT fully vaccinated OR NOT COVID-recovered
- International travel within past 10 days and NOT fully vaccinated OR NOT COVID-recovered
  - See Table 1 for testing guidance after international travel

**PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT, IF POSITIVE SCREEN:**

- Refer to patient’s provider
- Defer in-person visit until end of 10-day quarantine unless needed for clinical or testing indications.
- Consider telehealth visit

**UPON ARRIVAL, IF POSITIVE SCREEN:**

- Prioritize symptomatic patients or COVID-19 diagnosis within past 10 days for immediate placement in an exam room.
- See Table 2 and Table 3 for PPE and Transmission-Based Precautions guidance
- See Appendix for in-person visit algorithm

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1 Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever (subjective or measured > 100°F or 37.8°C), cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, diarrhea, nasal congestion, headache, chills/rigors, new onset loss of smell, and altered sense of taste.

2 Fully vaccinated: ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine regimen. For individuals vaccinated outside of the US, COVID-19 vaccines that have received a WHO emergency use listing are acceptable.

3 COVID-recovered: history of prior COVID-19 infection within past 3 months.

4 International travelers who are fully vaccinated or COVID-recovered are not required to quarantine, but travelers who are NOT fully vaccinated or NOT COVID-recovered must either quarantine for 7 days and have a negative test 3-5 days after travel or quarantine for 10 days without a test.
Interim Guidance for Ambulatory Settings:
COVID-19 Screening, Testing, PPE and Transmission Precautions
December 16, 2021 (Replaces December 3, 2021 Guidance)


Table 1: TEST for SARS-CoV-2

- Test for SARS-CoV-2 if patient:
  - Has symptoms of COVID-19
  - Was exposed to COVID-19 within previous 10 days
  - Undergoing surgery or certain procedures (Interim Guidance for Surgery and Procedures)
  - Returning from international travel and requests testing 3-5 days after return to U.S.1
- Patients who are COVID-recovered (history of COVID-19 within previous 3 months) generally do not require repeat testing for SARS-CoV-2. Exceptions may include:
  - Moderately or severely immunocompromised patients for whom testing is required to discontinue isolation; see: Discontinuing Transmission-Based Precautions for Patients with Confirmed COVID-19. Testing is not required for these patients in the outpatient setting if at least 4 weeks have passed since the initial positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and they have met all other clinical criteria.
  - Patients who develop new symptoms suggestive of COVID-19

1 International travelers who are NOT fully vaccinated or NOT COVID-recovered must either quarantine for 7 days with a negative test 3-5 days after travel, or quarantine for 10 days without a test.

Table 2: USE APPROPRIATE PPE

- Well-fitting surgical mask (or N95) at ALL times1
- Eye protection1 for ALL patient care, regardless of COVID-19 status
- For NP swab collection in asymptomatic patient, wear surgical mask, eye protection, and gloves
- N95 respirator for ALL aerosol-generating procedures (AGP) regardless of COVID-19 status
- See guidance for patient and visitor mask and PPE: https://infonet.nyp.org/EPI/Documents/InterimGuidelines_SurgicalMaskUseatNYPbyPatientsVisitorsHCP.pdf

1 See rationale for universal PPE: https://infonet.nyp.org/EPI/Covid19Documents/FAQsExpandingUniversalPPE.pdf

Table 3: Transmission-Based Precautions and PPE for Patients with Symptoms or Recent Diagnosis of COVID-19 regardless of SARS-CoV-2 exposure, international travel, or vaccination status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of COVID-19 OR COVID-19 diagnosis within past 10 days</th>
<th>Precautions</th>
<th>PPE for HCP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes1</td>
<td>Enhanced Droplet (terminally clean)</td>
<td>N95 recommended (surgical mask acceptable alternative) + Eye Protection + Gown + Gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Standard2</td>
<td>Well-fitting surgical mask (or N95 respirator) + eye protection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1Refer to clinician. Consider telehealth visit. See Appendix.
2Patients who report exposure or international travel but who are ASYMPTOMATIC do not require Enhanced Droplet Precautions* in the ambulatory setting, regardless of vaccination status.
3The risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from contaminated surfaces is very low. Thus, in the ambulatory setting, standard
Interim Guidance for Ambulatory Settings:
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Precautions, hand hygiene, universal mask/eye protection, and routine environmental cleaning are sufficient when caring for asymptomatic patients, regardless of their exposure, travel history, or vaccination status. HCP should wear gown and gloves if contact with secretions or excretions is anticipated.

Appendix: In-Person¹ Visit: Algorithm for COVID-19 including Symptoms, Exposures, and Testing

Patient reports symptoms of COVID-19¹

YES

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 is recommended for all symptomatic persons. Consider testing for other respiratory pathogens per NYP/CU/WC testing guidance.⁶

NO

Patient reports:

- Exposure to COVID-19 within 10 days²,³ and NOT fully vaccinated⁴ OR NOT COVID-recovered⁵

YES

Testing for SARS-CoV-2 is recommended by NYSDOH.¹

COVID-19 exposure²,³ if not fully vaccinated⁴ or not COVID-recovered⁵: quarantine for 10 days after exposure.

All persons with exposure to COVID-19 should be given recommendations to:
1. Stay home if symptoms develop.
2. Perform hand hygiene frequently.
3. Wear a face mask or face covering when unable to practice social distancing.
4. Practice respiratory etiquette (e.g., cover mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing).

NO

Proceed with routine visit

¹Consider telehealth visit for exposed or symptomatic individuals if severity of illness does not warrant in-person evaluation.
²Exposed individuals must continue daily symptom monitoring and all recommended interventions including use of face coverings and hand hygiene through Day 14.
³PLEASE NOTE: while CDC and NYSDOH have relaxed certain quarantine restrictions in the community setting, anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or who has traveled internationally is still required to strictly adhere to other interventions (e.g., hand hygiene, use of face coverings) through Day 14.
⁴Fully vaccinated: ≥2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or ≥2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine.
⁵COVID-recovered: history of COVID-19 within past 3 months.
⁶See Testing Guidance for Respiratory Pathogens for indications for testing and appropriate testing panel.