

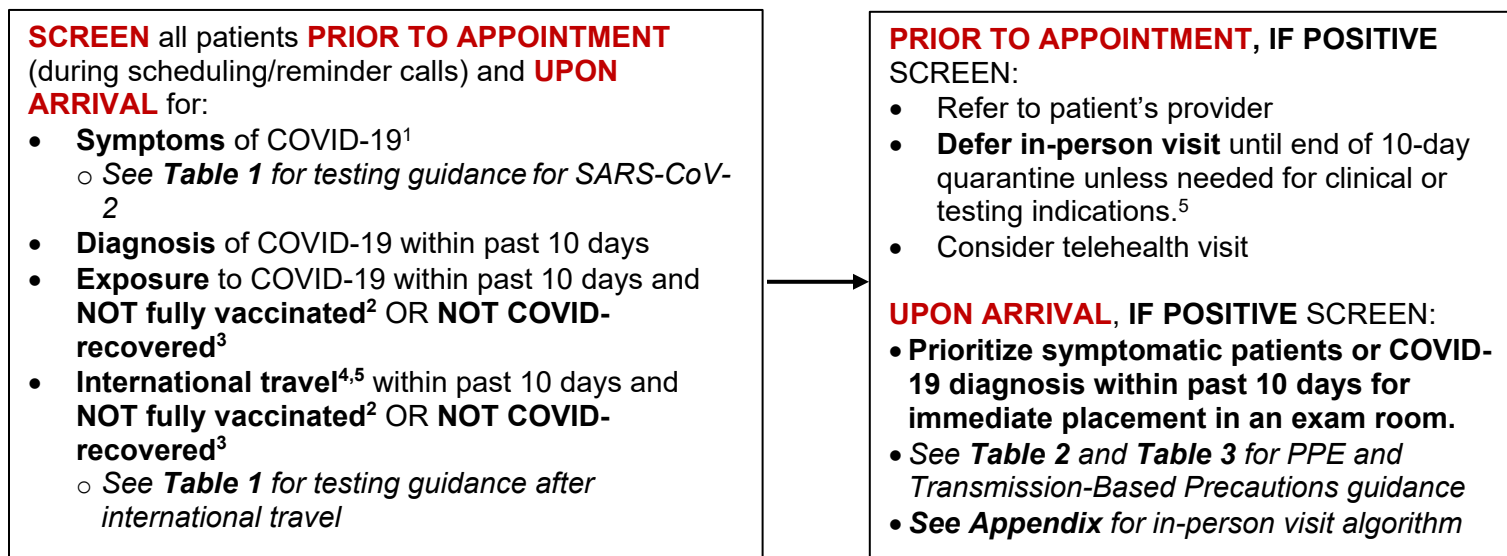
**Interim Guidance for Ambulatory Settings:  
COVID-19 Screening, Testing, PPE and Transmission Precautions  
December 16, 2021 (Replaces December 3, 2021 Guidance)**

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**



<sup>1</sup> **Symptoms of COVID-19** include fever (subjective or measured  $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$  or  $37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches, diarrhea, nasal congestion, headache, chills/rigors, new onset loss of smell, and altered sense of taste.

<sup>2</sup> **Fully vaccinated:**  $\geq 2$  weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series, or  $\geq 2$  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.

<sup>3</sup> **COVID-recovered:** history of prior COVID-19 infection within past 3 months.

<sup>4</sup> **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.

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<sup>5</sup> For NYS Department of Health travel-related advisory see: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.

**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.<sup>1</sup>
- 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

<sup>1</sup> 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 times<sup>1</sup>**
- **Eye protection<sup>1</sup> 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](https://infonet.nyp.org/EPI/Documents/InterimGuidelines_SurgicalMaskUseatNYPbyPatientsVisitorsHCP.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> 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**

Symptoms of COVID-19 OR COVID-19 diagnosis within past 10 days	Precautions	PPE for HCP
Yes <sup>1</sup>	Enhanced Droplet (terminally clean)	N95 recommended ( <i>surgical mask acceptable alternative</i> ) + Eye Protection + Gown + Gloves
No	Standard <sup>2</sup>	Well-fitting surgical mask (or N95 respirator) + eye protection

<sup>1</sup>Refer to clinician. Consider telehealth visit. See **Appendix**.

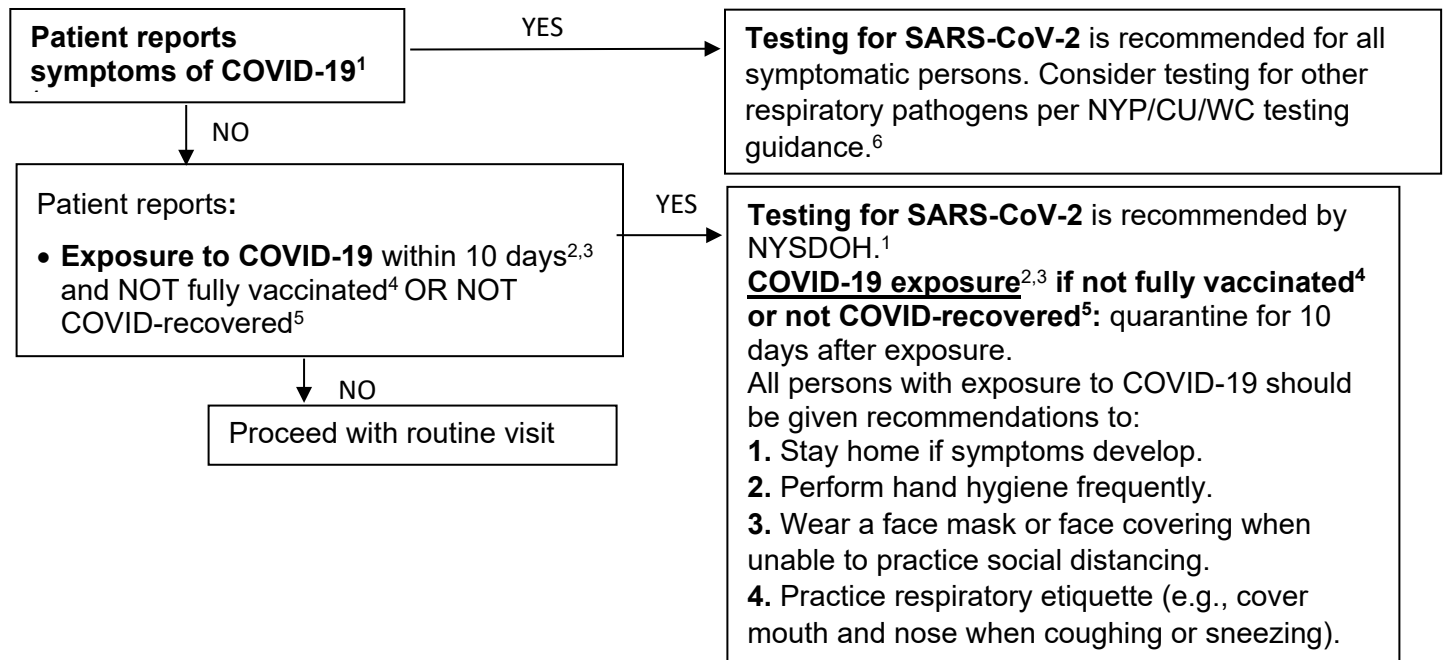
<sup>2</sup>Patients who report exposure or international travel but who are ASYMPTOMATIC do not require Enhanced Droplet Precautions\* in the ambulatory setting, regardless of vaccination status.

<sup>2</sup>The risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission from contaminated surfaces is very low. Thus, in the ambulatory setting, standard

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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-Person<sup>1</sup> Visit: Algorithm for COVID-19 including Symptoms, Exposures, and Testing**



<sup>1</sup>Consider **telehealth visit** for exposed or symptomatic individuals if severity of illness does not warrant in-person evaluation.

<sup>2</sup>**Exposed individuals** must continue daily symptom monitoring and all recommended interventions including use of face coverings and hand hygiene through Day 14.

<sup>3</sup>**PLEASE 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.

<sup>4</sup>**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.

<sup>5</sup>**COVID-recovered:** history of COVID-19 within past 3 months.

<sup>6</sup>See [Testing Guidance for Respiratory Pathogens](#) for indications for testing and appropriate testing panel.