



## Taking a Shot at Avoiding Quarantine (and COVID-19): A Layered Approach

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to stay up-to-date with the latest guidance from the CDC. On February 10, 2021, the CDC released [new guidance for the general public regarding mask-wearing](#) and [quarantining for individuals who have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine](#). This new guidance is important for employers whose employees are working in-person and for employers in certain industries who may have fully-vaccinated employees.

### **No Quarantine Required for Fully-Vaccinated Individuals**

Individuals who are fully vaccinated and who are subsequently exposed to COVID-19 are no longer required to quarantine if certain criteria are met. The criteria are: (1) the individual is fully vaccinated and at least two weeks have passed since he or she received their second dose of the vaccine; (2) less than three months have passed since he or she received the last dose of the vaccine; and (3) he or she has remained asymptomatic since the COVID-19 exposure. Fully vaccinated individuals meeting these criteria should still watch for COVID-19 symptoms after exposure.

If all three of these criteria are not met, the CDC recommends continued compliance with current [quarantine guidance](#). It is important to remember that states and municipalities may have their own quarantine guidelines, so even if an individual meets the three above criteria, he or she may still need to quarantine under local requirements.

### **Masks: Ideally, Two Layers Should Be Worn**

Nearly a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly all experts agree that wearing a mask around other people is critical to stopping the spread of COVID-19. For the first

time, the CDC recommends wearing a mask or masks with multiple layers, which could include one cloth mask with several layers, or a disposable mask layered under a cloth mask.

The CDC also recommends wearing a mask with a nose wire (the bendable piece of metal at the nose). A nose wire allows the wearer to adjust the mask so that it fits snugly over the nose with no gaps, so that no air can escape the mask or enter the mask. Additionally, the CDC recommends wearing a mask brace or mask fitter over a disposable or cloth mask to ensure that there are no air leaks.

Importantly, the CDC *does not* recommend wearing two disposable masks at a time – multiple disposable masks will not improve the fit of the mask and will not provide extra protection. Further, if an individual chooses to wear a KN95 mask or respirator, he or she should not combine that mask with any additional masks.

## **Key Takeaways**

1. The CDC no longer requires quarantine for certain fully-vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 and meet certain criteria. Individuals who may fall into this category should carefully consider local guidance before deciding not to quarantine.
2. The CDC advises individuals who are in close proximity with others outside their immediate household to wear a mask with multiple layers or two masks at a time in order to better protect against COVID-19 transmission.
3. Guidance on COVID-19 transmission, vaccination, and recommendations for the workplace is changing quickly. Employers should stay up-to-date on current guidance from the CDC and local entities which govern COVID-19 protocols.

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