Infection Control Update – Guidelines for Discontinuation of Transmission Based Precautions and Retesting for Patients who have recovered from COVID-19

Update August 3, 2020

The CDC has issued updated guidance on the Discontinuation of Transmission-Based precautions for patients with COVID-19 infection\(^1\). Although SARS-CoV2-RNA PCR testing may remain positive for prolonged periods after initial infection this does not necessarily represent shedding of live, infectious virus. Accumulating evidence supports ending isolation and precautions for persons with COVID-19 using a symptom-based strategy and a retesting strategy is no longer recommended.

For COVID-19 patients hospitalized at UConn Health, the current recommended duration for Transmission-Based Precautions is 20 days from the date of the first positive test. Repeat testing is *not needed* to discontinue COVID-19 precautions among hospitalized patients.

**Symptom/Time-Based Strategy for Discontinuing Transmission-Based Precautions\(^2\)**

**General Criteria for Discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions for Hospitalized Patients\(^3\)**

- At least 20 days have passed *since the first positive SARS-COV-2 RNA PCR test* and
- At least 24 hours have passed *since last fever* without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

Patient on transmission based precautions for another indication (ex. *C. difficile*, MRSA) the patient can transition from COVID-19 precautions to that of the other organism of concern.

**Important:** Prior to discontinuation of Transmission-Based Precautions for a patient who tested positive for COVID-19 the *Department of Epidemiology must be called to review the case and make final approval for discontinuation of precautions.* Epidemiology can be reached through the Hospital Operator.

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1 \(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html\)

2 Select patients with mild illness or asymptomatic patients who test positive for SARS-CoV-2 may be eligible for discontinuation of Transmission Based precautions 10 days after the first positive SARS-COV-2 RNA PCR test on a case by case basis. Please call the Department of Epidemiology to review the case to determine whether precautions can be discontinued prior to 20 days post-test.

3 Patients with severe immunocompromising conditions (stem cell or solid organ transplant recipients, Immunosuppressive drugs (ex. cancer chemotherapy, chronic steroids, TNF alpha inhibitors, immunomodulators), Inherited immunodeficiency, HIV Infection with CD4 count < 200) should be handled on a case-by-case basis with consultation from Infection Control/Infectious Diseases
Repeat testing for SARS-CoV-2 among patients with a prior positive test after discontinuation of Transmission Based Precautions

For persons previously diagnosed with symptomatic COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, *retesting is not recommended within 3 months (12 weeks) after the date of symptom onset for the initial COVID-19 infection* in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Patients who are asymptomatic and admitted within 12 weeks after a positive test will not be retested on admission or prior to a procedure. Individuals within 21 days of a positive test should be managed using COVID-19 precautions. Asymptomatic patients who present for admission or pre-procedure testing > 12 weeks after their initial positive test will be retested in accordance with current procedures. Please review the attached table and testing algorithm for details.

For persons who recovered from COVID-19 and develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 during the 12 weeks after the date of initial symptom onset, if an alternative etiology cannot be identified, then the person may warrant retesting. Consultation with Infectious Diseases is recommended. Isolation is recommended during this evaluation.
TESTING ADMISSIONS - COVID 19  
(with previously known COVID-19 status)  
(Update August 3, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Known COVID Status</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>COVID-19 Symptoms</th>
<th>Test on Admission</th>
<th>Precautions/Floor Type&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>&lt;3 weeks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>COVID Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>3-12 weeks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>PUI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>3-12 weeks</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>COVID Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>&gt;12 weeks</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PUI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Within 72 hours prior to admission</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>COVID Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>Within 72 hours prior to admission</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>PUI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup>Patients who are COVID-Positive or those who are PUI with test result pending should be cared for using COVID-19 precautions (Gown, Gloves, Eye Protection, N-95 respirator)

<sup>2</sup>Consider alternative causes of fever and other symptoms. Infectious Diseases Consult recommended when considering retesting within the 12-week interval

<sup>3</sup>Patients with severe immunocompromising conditions (Stem cell or solid organ transplant recipients, Immunosuppressive drugs (ex. cancer chemotherapy, chronic steroids, TNF alpha inhibitors, immunomodulators), Inherited immunodeficiency, HIV Infection with CD4 count < 200) should be handled on a case-by-case basis with consultation from Infection Control/Infectious Diseases
COVID-19 Admission Testing Guidelines
UConn Health (Update August 3, 2020)

COVID Status

Unknown

Previously NEGATIVE

Previously POSITIVE

>3 days ago

< 3 days ago for pre-op assessment

Symptoms of COVID-19?

Yes

No

Test (or re-test) for COVID, admit as PUI

COVID testing NOT needed, admit to Non-Bio-contained unit

Patient refuses test

Presume COVID positive

Afebrile without antipyretics, Improving COVID symptoms, not severely immunocompromised

Presume COVID negative

< 3 weeks from positive test

3-12 weeks from positive test

>12 weeks ago

Febrile or other symptoms of COVID-19

Re-test for COVID – ID consult recommended

Admit as PUI to rule out unit and test on admission

Admit to bio-contained unit or Isolation Room

Admit to non-bio-contained unit

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