

Ask the Nurses: Frequently asked questions about COVID 19

1. If a student is sent home sick with suspected COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea) must all their siblings/household members be sent home as well and quarantined for 14 calendar days? Yes, according to the IDPH, if one of the household members is being evaluated for COVID-19, the rest of the household must be quarantined until an alternative diagnosis is made or negative result received.

2. How many days will Students/Staff need to quarantine following a positive COVID 19 test?

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, persons with **confirmed or probable** cases of COVID-19 must complete 10 calendar days of isolation from the date of first symptom onset and be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved before returning to school.

3. What if my child is diagnosed with a non-COVID illness, can they return to school? According to IDPH, students returning to school diagnosed with a non-Covid 19 illness must meet the criteria for returning to school for the illness which they have been diagnosed.

4. Is a doctor's note required to return to school? According to the IDPH, a health care provider's note documenting the alternative diagnosis, or a negative COVID 19 test result should accompany a student or staff returning to school.

5. What if a student/staff does not get tested for COVID 19? According to IDPH, Students and staff with COVID-like symptoms who do not get tested for COVID-19 and who do not provide a healthcare provider's note documenting an alternative diagnosis, must complete 10 calendar days of isolation from the date of first symptom onset and be fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved before returning to school.

6. Are we required to see a medical professional for COVID like symptoms? According to the IDPH, medical evaluation and COVID-19 diagnostic testing is strongly recommended for all persons with COVID-like symptoms.

7. What actions should be taken by students/staff sent home with COVID 19-like symptoms?

According to IDPH all students and staff sent home with COVID 19-like symptoms should be diagnostically tested. Student and staff should remain home from school until they receive the test results.

8. How many symptoms does a person need to have to be considered suspect for COVID-19?

According to IDPH, Children exhibiting **one or more COVID-like symptoms** should be immediately isolated and evaluated. Schools should evaluate each student/staff to determine if this symptom is new or if it is part of an existing condition.

9. What if my child has allergies or migraines or other conditions in common with COVID 19 symptoms? According to the IDPH, every symptomatic person should be evaluated by their healthcare provider on a case-by-case basis and decisions to test for COVID-19 should be based on their personal health history. **Diagnostic testing is strongly encouraged whenever an individual experiences COVID-like symptoms as it is possible to have COVID-19 and other health conditions at the same time.**

10. If a student or staff member presents a note or negative COVID-19 test result, for how many days is that test result valid? According to IDPH, a **negative PCR test is valid only for the day on which it was reported.** Because the time of exposure to infection for COVID 19 is 2-14 days, a person with a negative test may still develop infection at some point during the incubation period.

11. If a student or staff member is identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19 and is instructed to quarantine for 14 calendar days, do their household members and close contacts also need to quarantine? No, according to the IDPH, contacts of a person who is a close contact to a COVID-19 case do not need to self-quarantine unless they develop symptoms or if the person identified as the close contact develops COVID-19. They should, however, monitor themselves closely for symptoms of COVID-19 and if they become symptomatic, self-isolate and seek medical evaluation/testing.

12. Are schools required to report information to the local health department including cases, type of onset of symptoms, number of persons exposed, etc.? Yes, according to the IDPH schools must cooperate with the Local Health Department (Will County) to provide relevant information needed for mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

13. Are there any current domestic or international travel restrictions for which we should be monitoring and excluding students and staff? Anyone who has traveled internationally or domestically where COVID-19 transmission is high or increasing in the past 14 calendar days should stay home and monitor their health. Information on domestic travel can be found at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/travel>

For More Information/ Resources:

IDPH- Illinois Department of Public Health: Frequently asked questions for schools. Additional Guidance as of September 9, 2020

<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IDPH-School-FAQs.pdf>