

# New CDC and Wisconsin Guidance Contain Options to Reduce Length of Quarantine

## The CDC Guidance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently issued [revised guidance](#) with options for reducing the length of quarantine for individuals who are asymptomatic, but have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. While the CDC still acknowledges that the 14-day quarantine period provides the greatest protection from spreading the virus, they also recognize that a full 14-day quarantine period can be a burden for employers and employees alike.

The CDC's new guidance applies only to individuals who have been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive person, but are not showing symptoms. The new guidance provides the following options for reduced quarantine:

- An individual with no symptoms can end quarantine 10 days after exposure without testing;
- An individual with no symptoms can end quarantine seven days after exposure if they took a COVID-19 test no earlier than day five of quarantine and that test came back negative.

There remains a risk of developing COVID-19 for a full 14 days after exposure. Thus, the CDC continues to endorse a 14-day quarantine period. Where an individual ends quarantine before 14 days, the individual should continue to monitor their health, practice social distancing, wear a face covering and immediately isolate and notify health officials if they do develop symptoms.

## The Wisconsin Guidance

Consistent with the new CDC guidance, Wisconsin's Department of Health Services has updated its own [quarantine guidance](#) to permit reduced quarantine options for asymptomatic individuals. The Wisconsin guidance is effective December 7, 2020. There are a few key takeaways from the Wisconsin guidance:

- An individual with no symptoms can end quarantine seven days after exposure if they took a COVID-19 test no earlier than day six of quarantine and that test came back negative (more restrictive than the CDC guidance, which permits the test on day five).

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- Point of care antigen tests are acceptable to use for the purpose of reducing duration of quarantine, but PCR (non-rapid) tests are preferable.
- High-risk, congregate settings (e.g., long-term care facilities) should assess on a case-by-case basis whether potential benefits of shortened quarantine outweigh the risks of post-quarantine transmission.

Employers should remain diligent in reviewing CDC, state and local health guidelines. Employers with questions regarding the new guidelines or other COVID-19 developments should contact Brittany Lopez Naleid, [Shannon M. Toole](#), [Matthew DeLange](#) or a member of Reinhart's [Labor and Employment Practice](#).

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