

### **When can a COVID + women be safely seen for prenatal care, return to work or school?**

- The world of COVID guidelines changes rapidly and we are all challenged to stay current with the latest recommendations; this is true for determining when a COVID + patient is no longer infectious
- Initially, a test-based strategy was recommended with one or 2 negative tests required to be considered no longer infectious.
- Now, a symptom-based strategy is recommended as per the below 8-16-2020 CDC guidance which addresses both symptomatic and asymptomatic patients with COVID + tests
- Why? Because we now know that patients can have “positive” COVID test results **well past their infectious period**. A “positive” test indicates the presence of viral RNA and **not** the possibility of transmission.
- In an attempt to ensure a safe environment for patients and employees, some medical practices have required negative COVID tests. That practice is not recommended. The New Mexico Department of Health recommendations are the same as the CDC recommendations: Negative tests are not required for returning to work or school or being accepted for clinical care.

### **Duration of isolation and precautions for COVID + patients**

- For most persons with COVID-19 illness, isolation and precautions can generally be discontinued 10 days *after symptom onset*<sup>1</sup> and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms.
  - A limited number of persons with severe illness may produce replication-competent virus beyond 10 days that may warrant extending duration of isolation and precautions for up to 20 days after symptom onset; consider consultation with infection control experts.
- For persons who never develop symptoms, isolation and other precautions can be discontinued 10 days *after the date of their first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 RNA*.

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

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