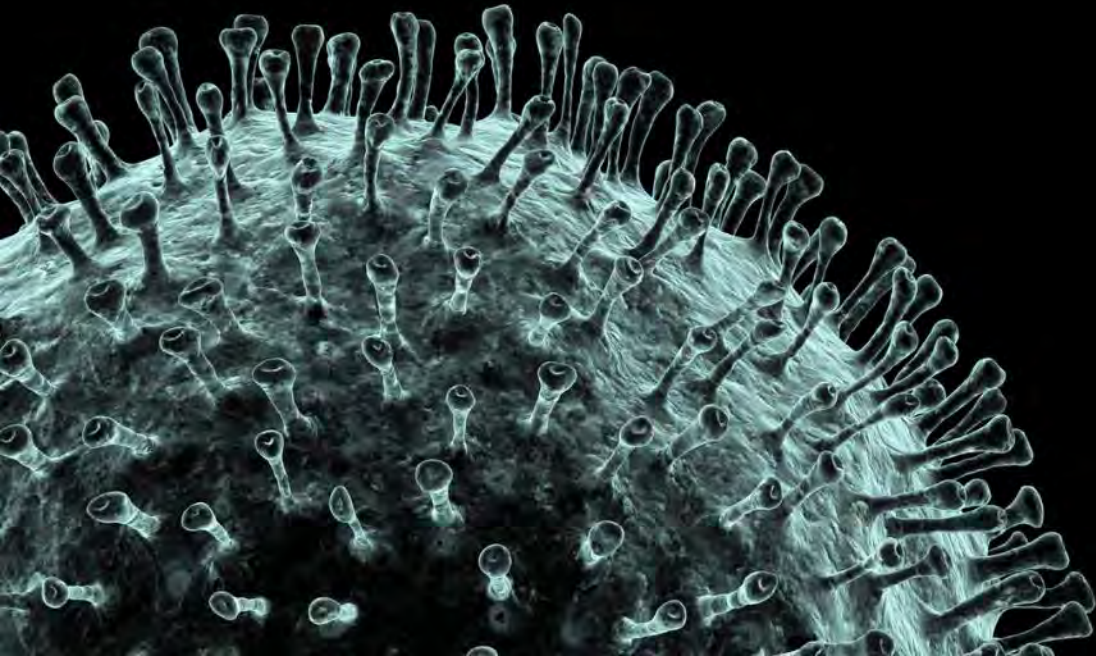


COVID-19 Conversations



Georges Benjamin

American Public Health Association



COVID19Conversations.org

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The Third Year of COVID-19: Is This The New Normal

Public Health Guidance In
Uncertain and Evolving Science

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Communicating Health Policy Guidance

- CDC makes its guidance decisions based on the science as we understand it at a particular point in time
- Communicating that science and the uncertainty around it is the challenge during a health threat with a high degree of variability and change
- Covers several audiences with different levels of understanding
- Recent examples of guidance: Masks, Isolation & quarantine, testing for work return & definition of fully vaccinated

What Mask Should I Wear?

Along with getting vaccinated and boosted, experts recommend upgrading your mask if you want optimal protection.

No Protection

Some Protection

Most Protection



No Mask or Improper Use

- Mask should fit over your nose and mouth and be snug against your face with no gaps
- Don't use masks that are damp, dirty or damaged
- Don't wear masks with exhalation valves, which allow virus particles to escape

Cloth Masks

- Washable and reusable. Masks should be washed at least once a day or as soon as they become dirty
- Multiple layers of woven, breathable fabric

Surgical Masks

- Disposable, intended for one time use
- Multiple layers of non-woven material
- Provides protection against large droplets

High Filtration Masks

(Respirators – N95, KN95, KF94)

- Varies by mask type, but reusable up to 5 times with proper care
- Filters up to 95% of particles in the air
- Seals tightly to the face when fitted properly (some facial hair can interfere with this seal)
- Designed and regulated to meet international standards. Check lists of trusted manufacturers from CDC and Project N95 to avoid counterfeit masks



If you don't have access to a high filtration respirator mask, double up. Single layer masks, such as bandanas and gaiters, are less effective, so wear a cloth mask with multiple layers or wear a cloth mask over a surgical mask. Be sure your mask fits properly—nose wires improve fit.

CDC Updates and Shortens Recommended Isolation and Quarantine Period for General Population

“The Omicron variant is spreading quickly and has the potential to impact all facets of our society. CDC’s updated recommendations for isolation and quarantine balance what we know about the spread of the virus and the protection provided by vaccination and booster doses. These updates ensure people can safely continue their daily lives. Prevention is our best option: get vaccinated, get boosted, wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of substantial and high community transmission, and take a test before you gather.”

CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky

UPDATED COVID-19 GUIDELINES

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL

OLD

Isolation: 10 Days

Quarantine: 10-14 Days

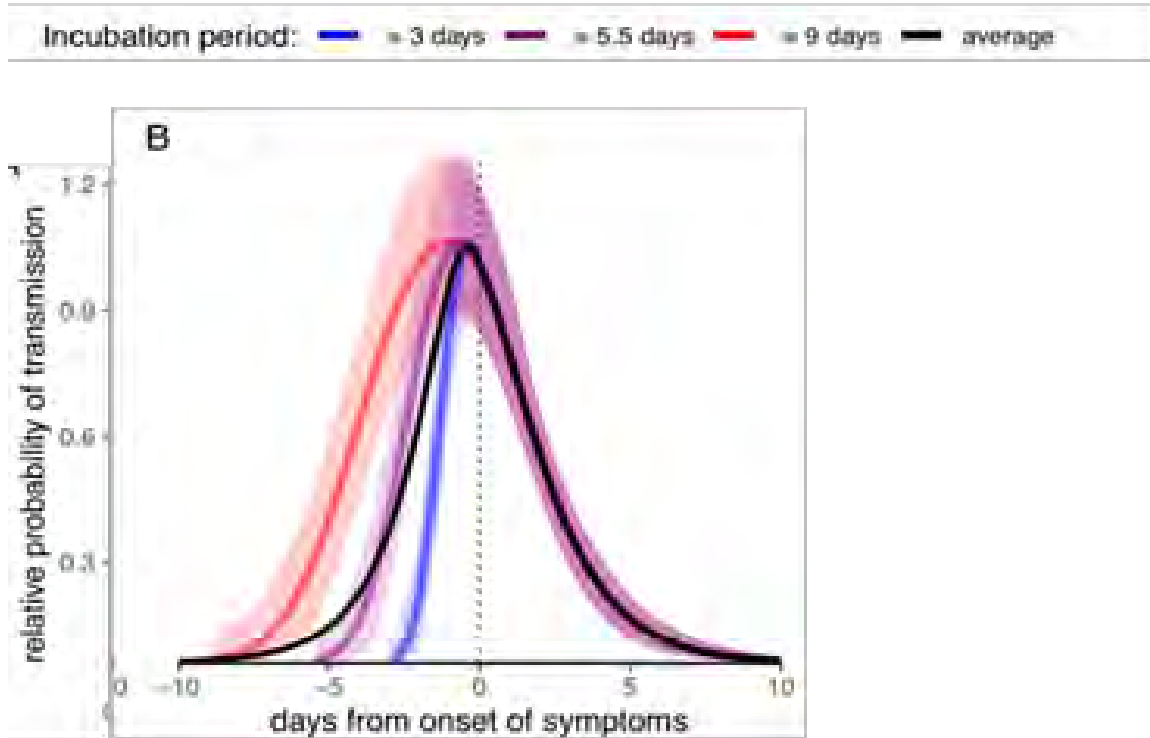
- None if boosted
- 7 days if negative test

NEW

Isolation: 5 Days
- 5 days of masking

Quarantine: 5 Days
- None if boosted
- 5 days of masking

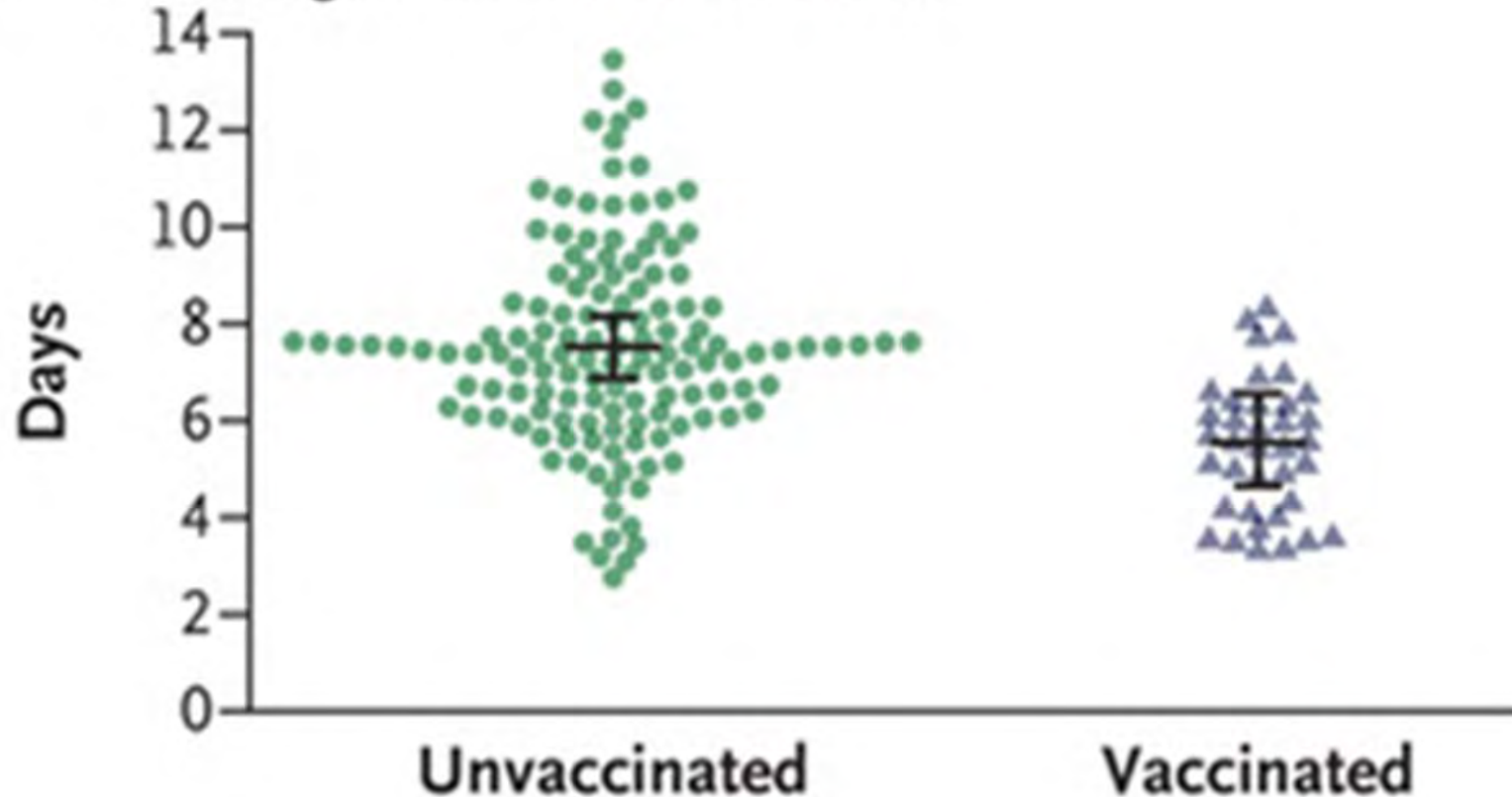
SARS-Cov-2 Transmission



- Pre-print modeling study that looked at likelihood of transmission in people with shorter and longer incubation periods prior to symptom onset
- Regardless of the duration of the incubation period, almost no transmission was predicted beyond day 5 since symptom onset

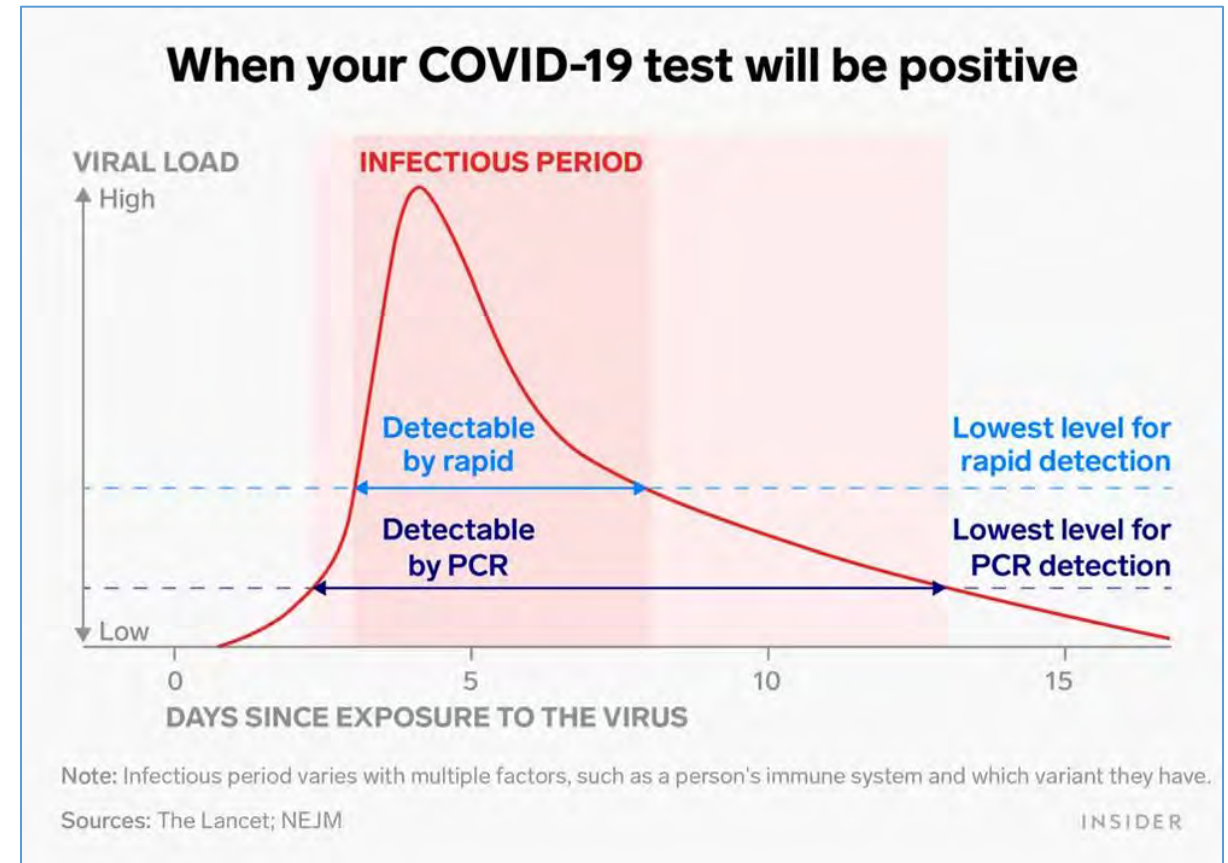
Viral Clearance With and Without Vaccination

Clearance Time According to Vaccination Status



Antigen Test For Return-To-Work

- Antigen tests give the best indicator of whether you are currently contagious
 - PCR testing will often be positive before and after you are contagious
- Symptom improvement plus a negative antigen test reduces the risk you will infect another person



In Summary

- We want to avoid having people at work if:
 - They don't feel well enough to work or are contagious
- People are most contagious early in their illness
 - Symptoms from breakthrough infections with Omicron are often very mild
 - Most transmission occurs prior to symptoms or in the first few days of symptoms
 - COVID viral loads drop after ~5-7 days in most people, and faster in those who are vaccinated:
 - If you're vaccinated, the antibodies you already have kick in and overwhelm the virus
 - People who aren't vaccinated have to start "from scratch" to make antibodies, so it can take longer
 - Testing can aid in risk reduction but timing important

Individual Vaccination Status

- **Up to date** means a person has received all recommended COVID-19 vaccines, including any booster dose(s) when eligible
- **Fully vaccinated** means a person has received their primary series of COVID-19 vaccines

This approach allows for any additional vaccine requirements

Public Health Policy Guidance



- Based on the best biological science and evidence at the time
- Utilize the best behavioral science to achieve compliance
- Must be communicated in a way that addresses the degree of uncertainty to ensure and maintain trust

About APHA

The American Public Health Association champions the health of all people and all communities. We strengthen the public health profession, promote best practices and share the latest public health research and information. We are the only organization that combines a 150-year perspective, a broad-based member community and the ability to influence policy to improve the public's health. Learn more at www.apha.org.



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