

September 17, 2021

RE: COVID-19 Prevention Reminders

Dear Students, Families and Staff,

It's heartening to see students, teachers and staff heading back into the classroom. Your school and leadership have been doing a great job preparing facilities to welcome people back to campus. COVID transmission is high in Snohomish County right now. For that reason, we want to share some important reminders.

Follow Isolation and Quarantine Directions

We know it can be scary and stressful to find out you or your student have COVID-19 or were a close contact of a case. It can also be confusing if you're hearing different or conflicting information. Here are the guidelines set for all schools and childcares in Snohomish County when it comes to isolation and quarantine.

- Isolation for a confirmed case of COVID-19
Individuals with a positive COVID-19 test must isolate at home, away from others in the household, for at least 10 days. Students and staff may end isolation after:
 - 10 days have passed since symptoms started, or the date of the positive test if asymptomatic, AND
 - Symptoms have improved, AND
 - It's been at least 24 hours since any fever has resolved without medication.
- No quarantine for close contacts that are fully vaccinated individuals
If a fully vaccinated student or staff member is notified that they are a close contact, they do not need to quarantine as long as they remain well and symptom-free. They should seek testing 3-5 days after last exposure. If they develop COVID symptoms, they should report that to the school, remain home, and seek testing as soon as possible.
- Quarantine for Students/Staff Not Fully Vaccinated
Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated must quarantine for 14 days, unless your school offers modified quarantine. They should ideally get tested right away and again 5-7 days after last exposure. If getting two tests done is not feasible, then do one 5-7 days after exposure. **Unvaccinated students and staff must stay home for the full 14 days, even if results are negative or if your school offers modified quarantine.** Note that the quarantine period may be longer if the confirmed case is a household member.

We are also getting requests from students and parents to appeal their quarantine or confusion because a clinic or provider told them they were cleared. However, healthcare providers do not have authority to change the quarantine period set by the school or public health. If you have a question or concern about a discrepancy between what you have heard from the school or public health and what you heard from a clinician, please remain in quarantine and contact the school for further guidance.

Stay Home When Sick

Contact tracers at the Snohomish Health District are seeing a number of cases that attended school, sports events, work or gatherings while symptomatic. Some had fevers or a cough, while others thought they were just fighting allergies. If you or your student aren't well, please stay home until symptoms resolve.

Get Tested

Unfortunately, we're also hearing reports of parents or friends urging people not to get tested to avoid an isolation or quarantine period. We cannot stress enough just how important testing, isolation of cases, and quarantining of contacts are to our fight against this virus. We can't interrupt transmission or prevent others from getting sick without them.

COVID symptoms can include one or more of the following:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- New loss of taste or smell

If symptoms develop, vaccinated or not, seek testing through your healthcare provider, clinic or pharmacy, or visit us online at www.snohd.org/testing. Those without internet access or needing language assistance can reach the Health District's call center at 425.339.5278 to schedule a testing appointment. The call center is open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Callers after hours or on weekends can leave a message to be returned on the next business day.

People should remain home and away from others until results are back. It is definitely permitted to seek medical care if needed; just remember to call ahead so they know you are coming and can take the proper precautions.

Get Vaccinated

As a reminder, there are a number of ways to look for available vaccine appointments. Contact your primary care provider, local pharmacy or visit www.snohd.org/covidvaccine for more resources.

There are a few important reminders when vaccinating minors:

- Pfizer-BioNTech is currently the only COVID-19 vaccine authorized for those 12 years of age and older. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are authorized only for people 18 and older at this time. Please verify what brand is available at a location prior to making an appointment.
- Those age 12-17 will need consent from a parent or guardian to get the vaccine. Providers may have different requirements for documenting consent, so please check the website or call ahead to find out what is needed for parent consent.
- **Please do not seek or schedule appointments for ineligible minors.**

Trials are underway on vaccines for younger children. Until vaccines are authorized by the FDA for those 11 years of age and younger, it's important that youth, families and staff ensure that all public health prevention measures are followed consistently. This means, masking up when out of the home, deferring unnecessary social gatherings, keeping a distance from people they don't live with, maintaining good ventilation in indoor spaces, and washing hands or using hand sanitizer frequently.

Thank you and your student for your patience and perseverance through these challenging times.

Sincerely,



Christopher Spitters, MD, MPH
Health Officer