

# COVID-19 Information for Infirmiry-Patient Visitors

Washington State Department of Corrections

## Introduction

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted people who are elderly or sick with other illnesses. It remains important to maintain preventive measures like universal masking and hand hygiene, regardless of vaccination status, to help protect your friends, relatives, and loved ones under our care. However, we also want to take into consideration the mental wellbeing of our patients within our facilities and understand that human contact is particularly important for critically ill individuals. In order to allow for close contact, including handholding, hugging, and sitting within 6 feet distance, while still limiting the risk of COVID-19 transmission, DOC with the support of the Department of Health (DOH), decided that visitors to patients within a DOC facility infirmiry can:

- 1) Show verification of a negative COVID-19 test result within 72 hours of the visit OR
- 2) Have a negative Binax COVID-19 rapid antigen test onsite the day of the visit.

If you choose not to test, you will be asked to maintain 6 feet of distancing throughout your visit. Active screening, masking, and hand hygiene will still be required of all visitors.

## What does it mean if I have a positive COVID-19 rapid antigen test?

If you have a positive COVID-19 rapid antigen test, you should assume you have COVID-19 infection unless told otherwise from a medical or public health professional. Many people with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms, so it is not unusual for a person with a positive test to feel totally fine. However, even with no symptoms, you can still give COVID-19 to another person. Since we do not want to put your friend, relative, loved one or other patients in the infirmiry at risk, your visit will need to be cancelled until it is confirmed that you no longer can pass this virus to others.

## What do I do if I have a positive COVID-19 antigen test?

According to public health guidelines, you should stay home except to get medical care. It is recommended that you tell your health care provider you had a positive COVID-19 test. They may want to see you by video or do a phone visit instead of an in-person visit. They may want you to get another type or a repeat COVID-19 test to confirm the diagnosis.

For more information, see the Washington State Department of Health's "[What to do if you have confirmed or suspected COVID-19](https://www.wa.gov/health/what-to-do-if-you-have-confirmed-or-suspected-covid-19)" (DOH 420-308) at <https://go.usa.gov/x6CeQ>.

## When can I return and have a DOC infirmiry visit?

You may reschedule your visit once a public health official or licensed medical provider has cleared you and feel that you no longer can spread the virus to another person. The facility will need a copy of a letter verifying this prior to you returning to the facility. However, if a follow-up in-person meeting is not possible, all efforts will be made to arrange for a virtual visit.

## Resources

For more information about COVID-19, go to:

- [coronavirus.wa.gov](https://coronavirus.wa.gov)
- [doh.wa.gov](https://doh.wa.gov)
- [coronavirus.gov](https://coronavirus.gov)
- [cdc.gov](https://cdc.gov)