WESTMINSTER
Presbyterian Church

Health & Church Attendance

Protecting Yourself and Others from Respiratory Illness

Introduction:

Westminster Presbyterian Church followed federal, state and county guidelines throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We learned many valuable lessons during the pandemic such as staying home and away from others when sick. This is important to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and especially to individuals at increased risk of severe illness. As the emergency response phase has shifted to the recovery and maintenance phase, these recommendations have evolved to address not only COVID-19, but other respiratory viruses such as influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

These recommendations are intended to provide practical guidance for activities such as church attendance when you may be experiencing respiratory illness. These recommendations take into consideration church attendees who may be at increased risk of severe illness; including older adults, young children, people with compromised immune systems, people with disabilities and pregnant people.

While mask mandates and public gathering closures have ended currently, it is important to respect and protect the health of others in our communities.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Recommendations for Respiratory Illness

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has revised the COVID-19 public health recommendations as the pandemic has evolved. It reflects a shift away from the emergency response phase to the recovery and maintenance phase. The recommendations reflect the lower rates of severe disease from COVID-19 and increased population immunity (from previous COVID-19 infection and immunization). The recommendations include other respiratory viruses, such as influenza (flu) and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

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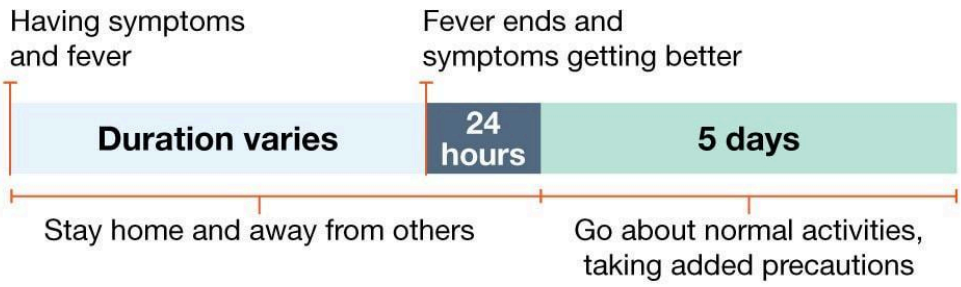
Per CDC, when you may have a respiratory virus:

Stay home and away from others (including people you live with who are not sick) if you have respiratory virus symptoms that are not better explained by another cause. These symptoms can include fever, chills, fatigue, cough, runny nose, and headache, among others.

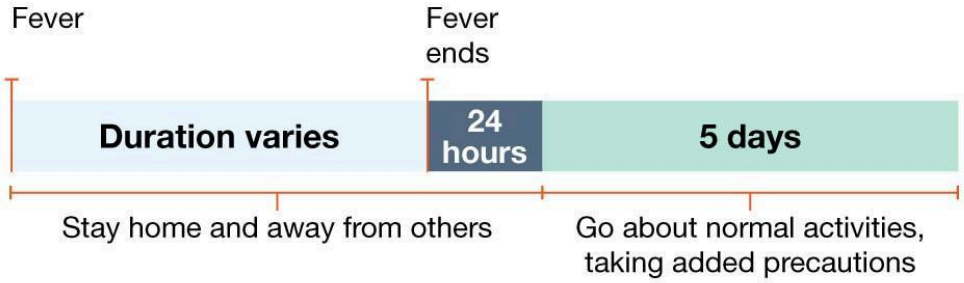
- You can go back to your normal activities when, for at least 24 hours, both are true:
    - Your symptoms are getting better overall, **and**
    - You have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- When you go back to your normal activities, take added precaution over the next 5 days, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors. This is especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.
    - Keep in mind that you may still be able to spread the virus that made you sick, even if you are feeling better. You are likely to be less contagious at this time, depending on factors like how long you were sick or how sick you were.
    - If you develop a fever or start to feel worse after you have gone back to normal activities, stay home and away from others again until, for at least 24 hours, both are true: your symptoms are improving overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication). Then take added precaution for the next 5 days.

Examples:

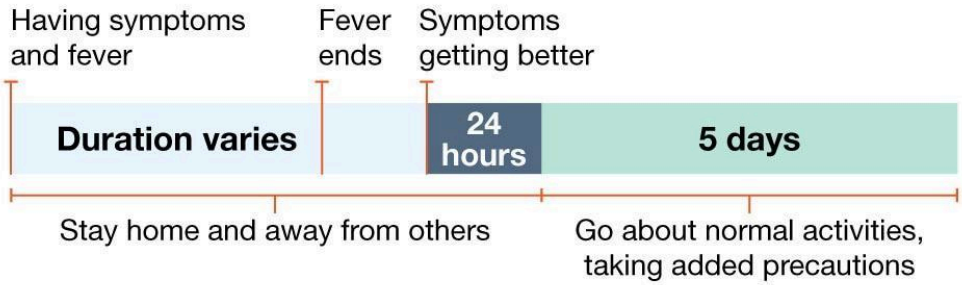
Example 1: Person with fever and symptoms.



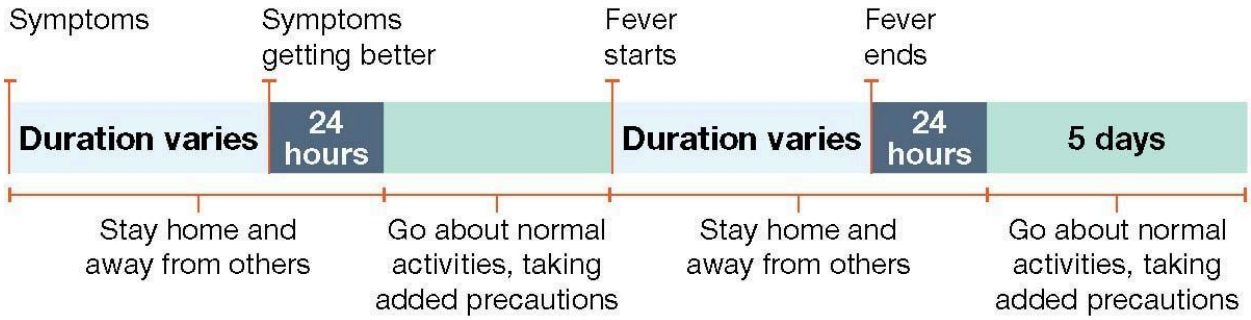
Example 2: Person with fever but no other symptoms.



Example 3: Person with fever and other symptoms, fever ends but other symptoms take longer to improve.



Example 4: Person gets better and then gets a fever.



Example 5: If you never had symptoms but tested positive for a respiratory virus.

You may be contagious. For the next 5 days: take added precaution, such as taking additional steps for cleaner air, hygiene, masks, physical distancing, and/or testing when you will be around other people indoors. This is especially important to protect people with factors that increase their risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses.

From CDC: https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/prevention/physical-distancing.html

Masks

Masks are not generally required but are especially helpful when:

- Respiratory viruses are causing a lot of illness in the community. Current county-level information can be found at: https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/data/index.html
- You or the people around you were recently exposed to a respiratory virus, are sick, or are recovering.
- You or the people around you have risk factors for severe illness. Generally, people at higher risk of severe illness from respiratory viruses are older adults, young children, people with compromised immune systems, people with disabilities, and pregnant people.

People may for their own personal circumstances/reasons choose to wear a mask at any time.

More complete information can be found at:
https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-viruses/index.html

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