

## Masking and Social Distancing

The First Presidency has urged the saints to wear masks at meetings whenever social distancing is not possible.<sup>1</sup> Requirements for social distancing and masking vary from location to location and are subject to change. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continues to recommend the wearing of masks in areas of substantial or high community transmission regardless of vaccine status.<sup>2</sup>

In guiding missionaries, mission leaders should be aware of local laws, rules, and regulations as well as COVID-19 recommendations from national and international medical organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the CDC. Area medical advisers can assist mission leaders with this.

## Vaccine and Booster

- The First Presidency urges members of the Church to be vaccinated.<sup>3</sup>
- Senior and young missionaries are strongly recommended to receive the COVID-19 vaccine before beginning their service if it is available in their home country. If a vaccine is available and they choose not to be vaccinated, they will be limited to service locations within their home country.<sup>4</sup>
- The CDC recommends that everyone ages 12 years and older should get a booster shot at least two months after their initial J&J Janssen vaccine or six months after completing their primary COVID-19 vaccination series of Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna. COVID-19 boosters will be recommended when a missionary is eligible but are not required. See [CDC guidelines](#) for further information.<sup>5</sup>
- A COVID-19 vaccine booster restores vaccine effectiveness against infection to 75%. COVID-19 vaccination decreases the risk of severe disease, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. CDC strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination for everyone five and older and boosters for everyone 16 and older.<sup>6</sup>

## Vaccine and Booster Side Effects

Missionaries may have some vaccine symptoms, which are normal signs that their bodies are building protection. Although they may affect their ability to do daily activities, vaccine symptoms should go away in a few days. Because each person's immune system is different, some people have very few or no vaccine symptoms – this does not mean the vaccine did not work.<sup>7</sup>

- Common vaccine symptoms include pain, redness, and swelling in the arm that was injected as well as swollen glands, tiredness, headache, fever, muscle pains, chills, and nausea. These symptoms are more common after the second dose of vaccine, where applicable. Individuals who have had COVID-19 recently may also experience more of these symptoms.
- Missionaries may apply a cool wet cloth to the affected arm and exercise it. They should drink plenty of fluids. They may take ibuprofen, acetaminophen, aspirin, and antihistamines to relieve symptoms should they occur.
- Serious side effects are very rare. Missionaries should contact a physician if: (1) injection site pain and swelling are worsening after 24 hours, or (2) if they develop shortness of breath, chest pain,

<sup>1</sup> <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/first-presidency-message-covid-19-august-2021>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/first-presidency-message-covid-19-august-2021>

<sup>4</sup> "Vaccinations", 38.7.13, General Handbook: Serving in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/expect/after.html>

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Medical Document (MD-00032)

Last Approved: 01/03/2022

severe headache, or swelling in the legs. They should also call if the common vaccine symptoms listed above do not resolve after several days.

- If the missionaries think they might be having a severe allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, they should immediately seek medical care by calling 911.

## Send for Testing

If a missionary has any of the following symptoms and there is concern for COVID-19 exposure, he or she should be tested for COVID-19:

The symptoms include:<sup>8</sup>

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle and body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

## Send to the Emergency Room

The missionary should immediately go to an emergency room if symptoms are more significant:<sup>9</sup>

- Trouble breathing such as:
  - The inability to go up a flight of stairs without stopping to rest and catch breath
  - The inability to complete two sentences without having to stop for breath
- Persistent chest pain or chest pressure
- New confusion
- Inability to wake up or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

This is not a complete list. Contact a physician for any other symptoms which are severe or concerning to you.

## Positive Test or Symptomatic for COVID-19

If a missionary tests positive for COVID-19 or is symptomatic, self-isolation measures should immediately take place (see “Self-Isolation for Those with Infection”).

- The CDC is shortening the recommended time for isolation for the public. People with COVID-19 should isolate for five days and if they are asymptomatic or their symptoms are resolving (without fever for 24 hours), follow that by five days of wearing a mask when around others to minimize the risk of infecting people they encounter. If there is a fever, they should continue to stay home until the fever resolves.<sup>10</sup>
- Infected missionaries should follow the same recommendations for time and wearing a mask. They should also wash their hands frequently, stay at least six feet away from other people, cover

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

their mouths with coughs and sneezes, and clean and disinfect surfaces in the living area regularly and after use. They should monitor their health daily.<sup>11</sup>

## Self-Quarantine After Close Contact to a COVID-Positive Individual (Including Asymptomatic Individuals)

Quarantine is to prevent someone who has been exposed to COVID-19 from spreading it to others before they develop symptoms.<sup>12</sup>

- For people who are unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second mRNA dose (or more than two months after the J&J vaccine) and not yet boosted, CDC now recommends quarantine for five days followed by strict mask use for an additional five days. If they are unable to quarantine, they should wear a mask for ten days. They should obtain a COVID-19 test on day five if possible.
- Individuals who have received their booster shot DO NOT NEED TO QUARANTINE following an exposure but should wear a mask for ten days after the exposure. For all those exposed, best practice would also include a test for SARS-CoV-2 at day five after exposure. If symptoms occur, individuals should immediately quarantine until a negative test confirms symptoms are not attributable to COVID-19.

In all cases, a missionary should follow all local health orders on social distancing and wearing a mask, wash their hands frequently, and use hand sanitizer. If a missionary becomes symptomatic, he or she should self-isolate (see “Self-Isolation for Those with Infection”).

## Self-Isolation For Those with Infection

Isolation is to keep someone who is known or believed to be infected from spreading it to others. The below recommendations are for both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons:<sup>13</sup>

- Stay home for five days.
- If the missionary has a fever, he or she should continue to stay home until the fever resolves.
- If the missionary continues to have no symptoms or the symptoms are resolving after five days, the missionary can leave the house.
- The missionary should continue to wear a mask around others for five additional days after the initial five days of isolation.

## Quarantine and Isolation for Missionaries Living in Apartments in Groups of 4-6

When a single member of a group household is symptomatic or tests positive:<sup>14</sup>

- The symptomatic missionary should separate himself or herself from other missionaries by staying in a specific room if possible. Use a separate bathroom if possible.
- Infected missionaries should always wear a mask when around other missionaries,

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html>; [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html)

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wash their hands frequently, stay at least six feet away from other people, cover their mouths with coughs and sneezes, and clean and disinfect surfaces in the living area regularly and after use. They should monitor their health daily.<sup>15</sup>

- Uninfected missionaries should maintain a six-foot distance from the infected missionary.
- Uninfected missionaries in the apartment should follow the guidelines listed above in the section "Self-Quarantine After Close Contact to a COVID-Positive Individual (Including Asymptomatic Individuals)".
- Comply with social distancing and face covering when leaving home (and leave home only for essentials).

## Location on [www.missionarymedical.org](http://www.missionarymedical.org)

[www.missionarymedical.org](http://www.missionarymedical.org) landing page (before and after login)

Mission President Resources -> COVID-19 -> Reference Guide

Medical Care -> Missionary Department Pre-Field and In-Field Medical Guidelines -> Infectious Diseases  
-> COVID-19 Related Resources -> Mission President Reference Guide

Policies -> Missionary Department Pre-Field and In-Field Health Guidelines -> Infectious Diseases ->  
COVID-19 Related Resources -> Mission President Reference Guide

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<sup>15</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fdaily-life-coping%2Fliving-in-close-quarters.html)