

# Employee Testing, Exposure and Return-to-Work Guidelines

\*\*\*Please see Appendix B for a review of specific scenarios related to COVID-19 exposure and symptoms in health care workers.

Now that novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is spreading in our communities, all health care workers (HCWs) are at risk of exposure to COVID-19, whether in the workplace or in the community.

ALL health care workers should self-monitor for fever and respiratory symptoms, which means ensuring you are asymptomatic before reporting to work for each shift. If symptoms develop, remain at home in isolation and document your self-monitoring until you're asymptomatic, following these instructions and using the **Symptom Self-Monitoring Tracker in Appendix A**. Please adhere to UC San Diego Health masking and other personal protective equipment (PPE) policies for proper protection guidelines in the work setting.

Here's more information:

## 1. Who needs to document self-monitoring for COVID-19?

- Any health care workers who have been told they were in contact with a COVID-positive HCW.
- Any HCW with a household member with COVID-19 symptoms and/or COVID-19 diagnosis.
- Any HCW exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 patient due to the lack of proper PPE. This may occur if:
  - ◆ You examined a confirmed COVID-19 patient without wearing appropriate PPE and were within 6 feet of the patient for more than 90 seconds.
  - ◆ A confirmed unmasked COVID-19 patient coughed or sneezed within 6 feet of you, and you were not wearing both a regular mask and eye protection.
  - ◆ You touched a confirmed COVID-19 patient's respiratory secretions and then the secretions came into contact with your eye, nose or mouth before you cleaned your hands.
  - ◆ You performed an aerosol-generating procedure (such as intubation, bronchoscopy, nebulizer treatment or positive pressure ventilation) without an N95 mask or a powered air-purifying respirator (PAPR).

## 2. I've been told I need to document self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms. What should I do now?

Monitor yourself for all the symptoms below twice a day using the 14-day **Symptom Self-Monitoring Tracker in Appendix A** for your convenience. The 14 days of tracking should be from the last day you had contact with the infected individual. Such monitoring allows you to get the right medical care and testing as quickly as possible, while also protecting other people from getting sick.

Here are the symptoms to look for:

- Fever (temperature > 100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- New cough
- New shortness of breath
- New loss of smell or taste

### 3. What should I do if I develop COVID-19 symptoms from confirmed work exposure?

- Stay home and call your supervisor to report symptoms and arrange coverage.
- Call UC San Diego Health's Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine (COEM) Employee Exposure Support Line at **619-543-8260** for evaluation and to arrange testing if deemed necessary.
- After symptoms are resolved, you will receive a verbal clearance from COEM, which is necessary before returning to work.
- See more information in **COVID-19 Exposure Scenarios in Appendix B.**

### 4. What should I do if I develop COVID-19 symptoms from an unknown or community exposure?

If you develop symptoms not clearly related to a work/occupational exposure, your case should be handled by your own primary care provider.

However, we understand that it may be difficult to contact your physician. For this reason, HCWs who are scheduled to work in the coming 72 hours should call the COEM Employee Exposure Support Line at **619-543-8260** to get further assistance with next steps.

In addition:

- If you have symptoms, remain at home in isolation while you are symptomatic. Follow current employee leave policies.
- We know you are committed to protecting our patients and team members, so please be honest with reporting symptoms or lack thereof.
- You should immediately contact your supervisor to report your absence from work.
- Your return-to-work timing will depend on resolution of symptoms, on whether you get tested for COVID-19, and on the test results.
- See more information in **COVID-19 Exposure Scenarios in Appendix B.**

### 5. I have COVID-19 symptoms. How can I protect my family and others?

Stay at home, except for medical care for serious symptoms that might require hospitalization. Do not leave home to go to work, school, public areas/crowds or shopping. Do not use public transportation or taxis. If you need groceries or supplies, have friends or neighbors bring them to you and leave outside your door.

Separate yourself from other people in your home as much as possible:

- Keep a 6-foot distance from others in the home as much as possible.
- Stay in a different room from others in your home.
- If available, use a separate bathroom.
- Do not share household items (including utensils, drinking glasses, towels and bedding) and wash right away with soap/detergent after you use them.
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer often, before and after touching your face or any other object that someone else may need to touch, such as a door handle or refrigerator.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue, or sneeze into your sleeve.
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean things that you and others may touch.

# Appendix A: Symptom Self-Monitoring Tracker

	Date	Time	Temp	Any Symptoms
Day 1		AM		
		PM		
Day 2		AM		
		PM		
Day 3		AM		
		PM		
Day 4		AM		
		PM		
Day 5		AM		
		PM		
Day 6		AM		
		PM		
Day 7		AM		
		PM		
Day 8		AM		
		PM		
Day 9		AM		
		PM		
Day 10		AM		
		PM		
Day 11		AM		
		PM		
Day 12		AM		
		PM		
Day 13		AM		
		PM		
Day 14		AM		
		PM		

# Appendix B: COVID-19 Exposure Scenarios

## Community Exposure: HCW is Asymptomatic

- You may work as long as you are asymptomatic and fever-free.
- You must self-monitor for fever and other symptoms prior to each shift and twice a day for 14 days to ensure you are asymptomatic.
- During each shift, attempt to maintain social distance when possible and reasonable (via video visits, communications by phone).

You should wear a face mask for 14 days after the exposure while you're at work in all areas of the health care system. Additionally, these workers should be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.

## Community Exposure: HCW is Symptomatic

- If you develop fever, a new cough, shortness of breath and/or new loss of taste or smell, you should stay home and self-isolate.
- If you go to work and report symptoms to the front entrance screener, they will provide you with a "Symptomatic Employee Instructions" handout.

### Symptomatic employee instructions:

- You should contact your supervisor to report the COVID-19-related absence.
- You will not be allowed to return to work until 3 days after symptoms resolve. For most individuals, this will mean **72 hours (3 calendar days) symptom-free before reporting to work.** (For example, if Monday was the last day you had these symptoms, you would be able to return to work on Friday.)
- We know you are committed to protecting our patients and team members, so please be honest with reporting any symptoms you have.
- Contact the COEM Employee Exposure Support Line at **619-543-8260** to further assist you with next steps.

### If HCW is tested:

- **Positive test result:** If you test positive for COVID-19, continue to monitor for fever and symptoms for 14 days. You may return to work when fever and all symptoms are resolved for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing drugs and 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
- **Negative test result:** If you test negative, you should be fever-free and asymptomatic for 48 hours (2 days) before reporting to work.

### If HCW is not tested:

- While COVID-19 is circulating in the community, the symptomatic HCW must remain at home in isolation while symptomatic. You should be fever-free and asymptomatic for **72 hours (3 days) before reporting to work.** (Last day of symptoms is day 0.)

While return-to-work clearance from COEM is not required, a discussion with supervisor prior to returning to work is necessary.

You should wear a face mask for 14 days after the exposure while you're at work in all areas of the health care system or until all symptoms are resolved, whichever is longer. Additionally, these workers should be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.

## Occupational Exposure: HCW is Asymptomatic or Symptomatic

- Notify your supervisor and Infection Prevention about potential exposure.
- HCW's name will be added to an Occupational Exposure list by Infection Prevention / COEM.
- COEM will contact work-exposed employee in order to provide further instructions the following business day.
- After symptoms are resolved, you will receive a verbal clearance from COEM, which is necessary before returning to work.

### While awaiting contact from COEM:

- You may work as long as you are asymptomatic.
- You must self-monitor for fever and symptoms prior to each shift and twice a day for 14 days to ensure you are asymptomatic.
- During each shift, attempt to maintain social distance when possible and reasonable (via video visits, communications by phone).
- If you develop fever, a new cough, shortness of breath and/or new loss of taste or smell, you should go/stay home, self-isolate and call the COEM Employee Exposure Support Line at **619-543-8260**.

### If HCW is tested:

- **Positive test result:** If you test positive for COVID-19, continue to monitor for fever and symptoms for 14 days. You may return to work when fever and all symptoms are resolved for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing drugs and 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
- **Negative test result:** If you test negative, you should be fever-free and asymptomatic for 48 hours (2 days) before reporting to work.

You should wear a face mask for 14 days after exposure while you're at work in all areas of the health care system or until all symptoms are resolved, whichever is longer. Additionally, these workers should be restricted from contact with severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after illness onset.