**AN EMPLOYEE TESTED POSTIVE**

**FOR COVID-19 AT OUR FACILITY, NOW WHAT?**

**Employee with positive test– What DO WE Do?**

1. **CONTACT YOUR US COMPLIANCE ADVISOR FOR GUIDANCE – IF NEEDED**
2. **CONDUCT CONTACT TRACING EXERCISE:**
   1. Conduct contact tracing for all employees with a positive test result and presumptive positives based on reported symptoms (fever, new loss of taste or smell).
   2. Contact employee with positive test result by phone if possible. If not possible, follow all protective measures (masking, social distancing, etc.) for an in-person conversation.
   3. Determine who the employee was in close contact (see definition in FAQ section at end of this document) with while at work for 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms or if asymptomatic the employee’s test sampling date. Also ask if employee was in close contact with other employees during off hours for the same time period.
   4. Determine all locations the employee visited within the facility since the last thorough cleaning. If longer than 24 hours since employee was last on site, no specific disinfection is required but routine cleaning is recommended. If less than 24 hours, clean **and** disinfect all areas visited and surfaces contacted by employee.
   5. Be kind but thorough during this conversation to find out who the employee had close contact with and all locations they visited in the facility during the specified time period.
   6. Inform symptomatic employee to contact their healthcare provider for further instructions and let them know when they can return to work based on guidance located [here](#Employer) in this guidance document.
3. **NOTIFY ERT – IMPLEMENT INFECTION PREVENTION PLAN**
   1. If possible, have one person be the contact for all sick employees.
4. **NOTIFY EMPLOYEES OF THEIR POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO A SUSPECTED CASE**
5. Without identifying the sick employee by name, inform other employees of their potential exposure.
6. Review local health department website for guidance targeted at employers to determine if exposed employees should be sent home for self-isolation and when to end quarantine or self-isolation. Summary of CDC guidance regarding quarantine of employees identified as a close contact can be found [here](#Employer).
7. **DISINFECT SURFACES IN AREAS VISITED BY EMPLOYEE**
8. Isolate areas visited by sick employee for as long as possible (up to several hours) to allow air to settle or turn over prior to cleaning. Increase ventilation if possible, including opening doors and windows. Clean and disinfect all high touch and horizontal surfaces, tools, and equipment. Once the area is clean and disinfected then employees will be allowed to return to area and resume work.
9. **employee return to work guidance****:**

Recommendations for quarantine and discontinuation of isolation, based upon an employee’s symptoms and testing status are below. CDC and most state departments of health do not recommend a test-based strategy alone to discontinue isolation and/or return to work. For people that previously tested positive for COVID-19 who remain asymptomatic after recovery, retesting may continue to return a positive result for a period of weeks but does not indicate that the employee continues to have an active infection.

* If an employee reports symptom(s) while at work or is identified as symptomatic during employee symptom screening at the facility:
  + Immediately separate symptomatic employee from other employees
  + Send employee home as soon as possible – safe transport if employee uses public transportation, rideshare or carpools
  + Provide employee with information regarding how to get tested for current infection (PCR or antigen)
  + Follow instructions below for an employee that is symptomatic and awaiting Covid-19 test results
* If an employee is symptomatic and awaiting\*\* COVID-19 test results:
  + They should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until results are available. If results are delayed, follow guidance for symptomatic and tested positive for COVD-19. Once results are available, follow the recommendations below based on results.
* If an employee is symptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19 by PCR or antigen testing, they should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 5 days\* have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
  + At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers; AND
  + Other symptoms have improved.
  + Continue to wear a mask when around others for additional 5 days (10 days total after exposure day)
* If an employee is symptomatic and tested negative\*\* for COVID-19 by PCR or antigen testing, they should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers; AND
  + Other symptoms have improved.
* If an employee is symptomatic and has not been tested\*\* for COVID-19 by PCR or antigen testing, they should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 5 days\* have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
  + At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers; AND
  + Other symptoms have improved.
  + Continue to wear a mask when around others for additional 5 days (10 days total after exposure day)
* If an employee has not been exposed, is asymptomatic and awaiting\*\* COVID-19 test results from a screening test:
  + No isolation is required while waiting for test results. They should take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Once results are available, follow recommendations based on results.
* If an employee is asymptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19 by PCR or antigen testing, they should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 5 days\* have passed since specimen collection of the first positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen testing while asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, follow guidance for symptomatic and tested positive for COVID-19.
* If an employee is asymptomatic and tested positive\*\* for COVID-19 by serology (antibody):
  + No isolation is required since there is a low likelihood of active infection. Take everyday precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
* If a critical/essential employee is a close contact of a confirmed case but is asymptomatic and tested negative\*\* for COVID-19 by PCR or antigen testing:
  + See \*\* below before allowing employee to return-to-work.
* If an employee has other non-compatible symptoms and has not been tested for COVID-19, they should stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers; AND
  + Other symptoms have improved.

\*An employee who had severe/critical illness or is severely immunocompromised should:

* If symptomatic, stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; AND
  + At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers; AND
  + Other symptoms have improved.
* If asymptomatic, stay home away from others or under isolation precautions until:
  + At least 20 days have passed since specimen collection of the first positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen testing while asymptomatic. If symptoms develop, follow guidance for symptomatic and tested positive for COVD-19.

\*\*An employee who had known close contact exposure with a confirmed COVID-19 case that is:

* **Unvaccinated or completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted or completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted** is exposed and asymptomatic should quarantine for **5 days** from their last exposure to the case and wear a mask when around others for an additional **5 days** (**10 days total after exposure day**).
* **Unvaccinated or completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago and are not boosted or completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and are not boosted** is exposed and asymptomatic and they are a **critical essential worker** that cannot quarantine, they can be allowed to continue to work as long as mask wearing is required and strictly enforced for **10 days** following the exposure day. Also, the employee should complete a Covid – 19 antigen or PCR test on **day 5** after exposure if possible.
* **Fully vaccinated and boosted or completed the second dose of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine less than 6 months prior to the exposure or the J&J single dose vaccine less than 2 months prior to the exposure** that are exposed and asymptomatic can continue to work as long as mask wearing is required and strictly enforced for **10 days** following the exposure day. Also, the employee should complete a Covid – 19 antigen or PCR test on **day 5** after exposure if possible.

**Glossary of Terms:**

1. Close contact\* for COVID-19 is defined as any of the following exposures to an individual during their infectious period:

* Individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period\*\*
* Individual providing care in a household without using recommended infection control precautions
* Individual who has had direct physical contact (hugging or kissing)
* Individual who has shared eating and/or drinking utensils, and
* Individual who has been sneezed on, coughed on, or got respiratory droplets on them.

\*Close contact does not include healthcare providers or EMS providers using appropriate PPE and implementing appropriate infection control practices.

\*\*Individual exposures added together over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). Data are limited, making it difficult to precisely define “close contact;” however, 15 cumulative minutes of exposure at a distance of 6 feet or less can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation. Factors to consider when defining close contact include proximity (closer distance likely increases exposure risk), the duration of exposure (longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), whether the infected individual has symptoms (the period around onset of symptoms is associated with the highest levels of viral shedding), if the infected person was likely to generate respiratory aerosols (e.g., was coughing, singing, shouting), and other environmental factors (crowding, adequacy of ventilation, whether exposure was indoors or outdoors). Because the general public has not received training on proper selection and use of respiratory PPE, such as an N95, the determination of close contact should generally be made irrespective of whether the contact was wearing respiratory PPE. At this time, differential determination of close contact for those using fabric face coverings is not recommended.

1. Congregate setting: Any facility where people living in a group setting share living space (including bathroom or kitchen) AND those living there depend on the facility for:

* Completion of activities of daily living; OR
* Student or worker housing (e.g., dormitories or residence halls)
* Apartments
* Multi-generational or multi-family homes

1. Infectious period is the timeframe an individual can transmit disease to others. For COVID-19, this starts from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the individual discontinues isolation.
2. Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
3. Non-pharmaceutical interventions that can be practiced by individuals include the following: correct and consistent mask use, physical distancing, hand and cough hygiene, environmental cleaning, and disinfection, avoiding crowds, ensuring adequate indoor ventilation, and self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19 illness. These are also summarized here.
4. Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. For COVID-19, this means staying home or in a private room with a private bathroom for 10 days after last contact with a person who has COVID-19. However, some individuals may be eligible for the acceptable options to shorten quarantine outlined [here](#RTW).
5. Severe/critical illness: Illness due to COVID-19 that required any intensive care during hospitalization.
6. Severely immunocompromised means you have:

* Been taking chemotherapy for cancer recently;
* HIV and a CD4 T-cell count 14days); OR
* Another condition that a healthcare provider has told you makes you severely immunocompromised.

1. Symptomatic: People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

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

**Frequently Asked Questions:**

* **Am I legally required to notify the local Public Health Department if an employee tests positive?**
  + This varies by state and county. There are counties and states where it is required but for the majority of locations it is not required but recommended. Please refer to the local state or county health department website for guidance on requirements. Links to local health department websites can be found [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/hd-search/index.html).
* **Am I required to notify all employees?** 
  + This varies by state and county. There are counties and states where it is required but for the majority of locations it is not required but recommended. Please refer to the local state or county health department website for guidance on requirements. Links to local health department websites can be found [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/open-america/hd-search/index.html).
  + If employers want control of the message, we recommend that following notification of the employees who were in close contact with the infected or symptomatic employee they inform all employees and reinforce infection control behavior guidance.
  + From the CDC - *If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The fellow employees should then self-monitor for*[*symptoms*](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html)*(i.e., fever, cough, or shortness of breath).*
* *If a fully vaccinated employee or an employee who has recovered from Covid-19 and is exposed again or identified as a close contact; do they have to quarantine and be tested again?*
  + For a fully vaccinated employee or an employee previously diagnosed with COVID-19 who recovered from laboratory-confirmed infection and has met criteria to end isolation and remains asymptomatic, quarantine is not recommended in the event of close contact with an infected person within 3 months of symptom onset of their initial illness or since specimen collection (if asymptomatic) of the first positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen test. However, if an unvaccinated or previously infected and recovered employee (3 months or more after symptom onset or since specimen collection if asymptomatic) of their first positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen test is identified as a contact of a new case, they should follow quarantine recommendations for contacts.