Return to Work Criteria for Employees with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

The CDC has updated its guidance regarding return to work following isolation for health care workers who have confirmed or suspected (e.g., developed symptoms, but did not get tested) COVID-19 infection.

In addition to the guidance below, decisions about return to work should consider local circumstances (e.g., rate of new infections in the community), and whether the employee is at high risk, living with or caring for vulnerable persons at high-risk for illness and death if infected.

Except for rare situations, a test-based strategy is <u>no longer recommended</u> in determining when to return to work because in most cases, this results in excluding workers who are no longer infectious.

The guidance for return to work falls into one of four categories:

1. Employees with **no symptoms** and who are **not seriously immunocompromised**
2. Employees who experienced **mild to moderate symptoms** and who are **not severely immunocompromised**
3. Employees who experienced **severe or critical illness/symptoms**, or who **are severely immunocompromised**
4. Employees who have **not experienced any symptoms** but who **are severely immunocompromised**

Return to work guidance for each of these scenarios is outlined below. Per the CDC, "<u>Severely immunocompromised</u>" includes:

- Receiving chemotherapy for cancer, untreated HIV infection, combined primary immunodeficiency disorder, and conditions treated with Prednisone (in doses greater than 20mg) for more than 14 days

- Note: factors such as advanced age, diabetes mellitus, or end-stage renal disease may pose a lower degree of immunocompromise

- Ultimately, if there is a question, the employees' treating health care provider will determine whether the employee is immunocompromised

Determination of whether symptoms are "<u>Mild, Moderate, Severe or Critical</u>" is based on the severity of symptoms experienced. This may also be determined by the employees' healthcare provider. Your Director, Clinical Practice can help determine whether there is a need to contact the employee's health care provider

1. <u>Employees with no symptoms and who are not seriously immunocompromised may return to work when:</u>
   - At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive test

2. <u>Employees with mild to moderate symptoms and who are not severely immunocompromised may return to work when:</u>
   - At least 10 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared* **and**

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- o At least 24 hours have passed *since last* fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- o Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

3. Employees with severe or critical illness or symptoms, or who are severely immunocompromised may return to work
   - o 20 days after symptom onset
   - o At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
   - o Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved

4. Employees who are severely immunocompromised but have not had any symptoms throughout their infection may return to work:
   - o 20 days after the date of their first positive viral diagnostic test (e.g., the "swab" or PCR test).

Return to Work Practices: Upon return to work per the above, employees will:

- Wear a surgical facemask for source control at all times while at work until <u>all</u> symptoms are completely resolved
- After all symptoms have resolved, the employee can revert to using a cloth facemask (per company policy)
- A facemask for source control does not replace the need to wear an N95 mask when caring for clients and patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection
- Self-monitor for symptoms, and notify their manager if symptoms reoccur or worsen

Additional information regarding Quarantine

Please note that recommendations for discontinuing *isolation* in persons known to be infected with COVID-19 (above) may appear to be in conflict with recommendations for when to discontinue *quarantine* for clients known to have been exposed to COVID-19.

After an exposure, the CDC recommends a quarantine of 10 days.

After stopping quarantine, employees should:
•Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
•If they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their supervisor, local public health authority or healthcare provider.
•Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash their hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Please contact your Director, Clinical Practice or the Outbreak Committee with questions. Please also see COVID-19 Quarantine vs Isolation for definitions of isolation and quarantine.

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