

Return to Work Guidance for Healthcare Workers (HCWs) and First Responders (FRs) Who Have Confirmed COVID-19 Infection or Are Asymptomatic with High or Medium Risk Exposures* to a Known Case of COVID-19

RECOMMENDATIONS

Healthcare Workers and First Responders with Confirmed COVID-19

- HCWs and FRs should not return to work until:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
 - At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
- Healthcare workers and first responders can return to work provided they:
 - Adhere to respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene, and cough etiquette
 - Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility, if there is a sufficient supply of facemasks, until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- Employers should consider reassigning HCWs who work with severely immunocompromised patients, such as bone marrow transplant patients, to work in other areas.
- Some HCWs and FRs may experience prolonged cough as a result of respiratory viral infection, which may continue after isolation has ended. Such persons can be advised to wear a surgical mask or equivalent until their cough resolves or their health returns to baseline status.

Alternatively, **HCWs with confirmed COVID-19 infection can have isolation discontinued and return to work based on the following:**

- Resolution of fever, without use of antipyretic medication
- Improvement in illness signs and symptoms
- Negative results of a molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive NP swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart.

Asymptomatic HCWs and FRs with High or Medium Risk Exposures* to a known case of COVID-19

- HCWs and FRs should actively monitor for symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection but can return to work provided they:
 - Adhere to cough etiquette and hand hygiene
 - Wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility, if there is a sufficient supply of facemasks, until 14-days after the date of exposure.
- If symptoms develop during the monitoring period:
 - If HCWs and FRs develop fever (measured temperature > 100.4° or subjective fever) or respiratory symptoms consistent with COVID-19, they must cease patient care activities, immediately self-isolate (separate themselves from others), don a facemask (if not already wearing), and notify their supervisor or occupational health services promptly so they can coordinate consultation and referral to a healthcare provider for further evaluation.
 - Testing for COVID-19 should be performed, if available. (If testing not available, follow guidance above for infected HCWs.)
 - If positive, refer to guidance above for infected HCWs.
 - If negative, they can return to work under the following conditions:
 - Symptoms have resolved.
 - It has been at least 24 hours since the fever has gone without use of fever-reducing medications (for persons who develop fever).
 - They should wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility, if there is a sufficient supply of facemasks, until 14-days after the date of exposure. (If new symptoms arise during the 14-day monitoring period retesting is indicated as above.)

***For more information** on evaluation of HCWs diagnosed with or exposed to COVID-19 please see the following guidance from CDC: [Interim U.S. Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure in a Healthcare Setting to Patients with Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

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