



INFECTION CONTROL POLICY & PROCEDURE

Title: Return to Work Guidance for Health Care Workers (HCWs) Who have Confirmed COVID-19 Infection or are Asymptomatic with High or Medium Risk Exposures to a Known Case of COVID-19

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PURPOSE:

Guidelines developed by Washington State Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to prevent serial transmission of COVID-19 due to potential hospital and community based exposures to COVID-19.

POLICY:

Healthcare Workers (HCW) with Confirmed COVID-19

- HCWs should NOT return to work until:
 - CDC contingency phase- 5 days with/without negative test, if asymptomatic or mild to moderate illness defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever reducing medications and improvement of respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, and shortness of breath).
 - If after 5 days and still symptomatic, stay home for another 2 days and reassess.
 - If unable to return to work after the 7th day, a doctor's note will need to be provided to Human Resources when able to return to work or symptoms have subsided.

- HCW's can return to work provided they:
 - Adhere to respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene and cough etiquette.
 - Wear a facemask (surgical mask recommended at least 3 layers or more) at all times while in the healthcare facility.

- Employers should consider reassigning HCWs who work with severely immunocompromised patients, such as chemotherapy patients, to work in other areas.

- Some HCWs 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, HCW's with confirmed COVID-19 infection can have isolation discontinued and return to work based on the following:
 - Resolution of fever, without use of fever-reducing medication.

- Improvement in illness signs and symptoms.
- Negative results of a molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens within 24hrs apart.

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

- HCW’s 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 (surgical mask recommended at least 3 layers or more) at all times while in the healthcare facility.

- If symptoms develop during the monitoring period:
 - If HCWs 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 Employee health services (360-537-5198).
 - Testing for COVID-19 should be performed, as soon as possible if available.
 - 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 24hrs 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 date of exposure. (If new symptoms arise during the 14-day monitoring period retesting is indicated as above.)

- Expedited COVID-19 testing for healthcare providers please follow the attachment A.

Authored By:

Director Infection Control/Employee Health

Date

Authenticated By:

Chief Nursing Officer

Date