
Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19
- Common symptoms: Fever (100°F/37.8°C), Cough, Sore throat, Shortness of breath, or Rhinorrhea (runny nose)
- Atypical symptoms: Headache, Muscle aches, Fatigue, Anosmia (new loss of smell), Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea

Does the healthcare worker have symptoms consistent with COVID-19?

Yes
- Testing Performed?
  - No → Presumed COVID-19 Infection
  - Yes
    - Test Result
      - Positive
        - Return to work at least 7 days after symptom onset AND resolution of fever x 72 hours
        - Universal masking is recommended (If not possible, mask for at least 14 days after symptom onset AND complete resolution of cough)
        - Restrict contact with severely immunocompromised patients x 14 days
      - Negative
        - Return to work after resolution of fever x 72 hours and resolution of other symptoms
        - Universal masking is recommended (if not possible, mask for at least 14 days after a work-based exposure)
        - If the individual had a work-based exposure:
          - Self monitor x 14 days: temperature & symptom check at start & middle of shift
          - Restrict contact with severely immunocompromised patients x 14 days

No
- Able to work as long as asymptomatic
- Universal masking is recommended (if not possible, mask for at least 14 days after a work-based exposure)
- If the individual had a work-based exposure:
  - Self monitor x 14 days: temperature & symptom check at start & middle of shift
  - Restrict contact with severely immunocompromised patients x 14 days
- Follow symptomatic flow if symptoms develop

Please consult with your institution’s occupational health office for any additional considerations

1. Both common and atypical symptoms should be considered when evaluating whether a healthcare worker has symptoms consistent with COVID-19.
2. For confirmed positive health care workers working in certain high risk settings (including long-term nursing care facilities, jails or other congregate living facilities), employers may consider return to work after 14 days, unless the HCW has been retested and is no longer PCR positive.
3. Exposures to COVID-19 within the household require a 14 day quarantine period (unlike work-based exposures) due to increased risk of disease transmission in this setting.

Context:
The CDC guidance on return to work criteria for healthcare providers notes explicitly that it may be adapted by local health departments as needed to respond to local circumstances. The attached algorithm is designed to provide SFDPH recommendations for San Francisco healthcare personnel and organizations on return to work criteria.

Additional Notes:

- While these are standardized recommendations for San Francisco, healthcare organizations are not prohibited from modifying return-to-work criteria for their employees. For that reason, healthcare personnel should consult their institution’s occupational health office for any additional considerations.
- Where the algorithm states “resolution of fever x 72 hours” it should be taken to mean resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, as described in the CDC guidance.
- As noted, healthcare personnel who are household contacts or intimate partners of a COVID-19 case (i.e. not a work-based COVID-19 exposure) should stop work and undergo home quarantine for a period of not less than 14 days due to increased risk of disease transmission in this setting.
- “Universal masking” means that healthcare personnel should wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility. A cloth facemask may be used if the supply of medical facemasks runs out.
- Healthcare personnel recommended to self-monitor should use the fever and symptom criteria described under “Symptoms consistent with COVID-19.”
- “Severely immunocompromised patients” means transplant or hematology-oncology patients and others with a high degree of immune suppression, described in the CDC guidance.
- If availability of testing allows, healthcare organizations may also choose to use a test-based strategy for return to work as described in the CDC guidance.