

COVID-19 Diagnosis/Symptoms Protocols for Employees and Supervisors (August 15, 2022)

If an employee has tested positive or been diagnosed with COVID-19, exhibits any Coronavirus Symptoms, is awaiting COVID-19 test results, or has been confirmed as a “close contact” exposure, the following steps should be taken by the employee and their supervisor.

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Employee Steps

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, but do NOT have a positive test or diagnosis:

- If at work, go home immediately and avoid coming into close contact with anyone.
- Contact your supervisor as soon as possible to notify them. If you are able to work remotely you will be allowed to do so.
- A University Return to Work Coordinator will contact you to help determine next steps regarding returning to work.
- Contact your health care provider for diagnosis, treatment and/or testing, as necessary.
- If you are awaiting test results, notify your supervisor and remain at home until approved to return to work.
- Stay home (except to seek medical care).
- If, at any time following the reporting of symptoms you undergo a test for COVID-19 and you test positive, notify your supervisor of this development.

If you receive a positive test result or are diagnosed with COVID-19 (regardless of whether you have symptoms), you should:

- If at work, go home immediately and avoid coming into close contact with anyone.
- Contact your supervisor as soon as possible to notify them.
- A University Return to Work Coordinator will contact you to help determine next steps regarding returning to work.
- Consult your health care provider.
- Stay home (except to seek medical care).
- Prior to returning to work, complete five days of isolation starting when symptoms began. Additionally, prior to returning to work, at least 24 hours should have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medication and an improvement in symptoms as directed by the University Return to Work Coordinator.
- After you have ended isolation, when you are feeling better (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptoms improving, wear a face mask while around others for an additional five days.

If you have been identified as a “close contact” exposure (or believe you have been in close contact with an infected person):

The Centers for Disease Control and prevention defines close contact as someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the patient meets the criteria for ending isolation.

- Take precautions and wear a mask for 10 full days after you have been exposed.
- Monitor daily for symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, etc.). If you develop symptoms, isolate immediately.
- Get tested at least 5 full days after your last exposure. You can develop COVID-19 up to 10 days after you have been exposed.

If you have been identified as a “contact of a close contact” exposure:

A “contact of a close contact” is defined as someone who has been in contact with someone who was identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19. In these instances, you do not need to self-quarantine unless you develop symptoms or the person identified as a close contact develops COVID-19. For situations where there may be concerns about returning to work onsite, your supervisor may allow you to telework (if appropriate) or utilize personal leave.

*UNC System COVID-19 Paid Administrative Leave for absences due to isolation orders or non-quarantine possible exposures or symptoms is discontinued as of August 15, 2022. Employees who are unable to work (onsite or remotely) should use personal leave.

Supervisor Steps

If the employee has COVID-19 symptoms and/or is awaiting test results, but does not have a positive test or a diagnosis:

- If the employee is at work when you are notified, make sure the employee is separated from others and immediately sent home. If remote work is available and the employee requests to work remotely, the employee should be allowed to continue to work.
- If the employee is at home, advise them to stay at home pending test results and instructions from the University Return to Work Coordinator.
- Complete the [COVID-19 EXPOSURE SUPERVISOR REPORTING FORM](#) and inform employee that a University Return to Work Coordinator will be contacting them. Notify the appropriate Division Head (or designee) and provide information regarding when the employee was last on campus. It is expected that this notification will occur on the same day.
- If the employee later notifies you that they have undergone a test for COVID-19 and received a positive result, advise them to remain at home and follow the guidelines for an employee that has tested positive or been diagnosed with COVID-19. Notify the appropriate Division Head (or designee) of the confirmed positive test and follow the below guidelines for positive diagnosis.

If the employee has been identified as a “close contact” exposure (or they believe they have been in close contact with an infected person). Note: Employees DO NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have symptoms. However, the employee should get tested 5 full days after their exposure, even if they don’t have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 10 days following exposure. The employee should monitor daily for symptoms and seek testing if symptoms develop.:.

The Centers for Disease Control and prevention defines close contact as someone who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the patient meets the criteria for ending isolation.

- Complete the [COVID-19 EXPOSURE SUPERVISOR REPORTING FORM](#) and inform employee that a University Return to Work Coordinator will be contacting them to confirm whether a “close contact” situation exists and to help determine next steps regarding returning to work.
- Notify the appropriate Division Head (or designee) and provide information regarding when the employee was last on campus. It is expected that this notification will occur on the same day.
- The University Return to Work Coordinator will contact the appropriate Division Head (or designee) after speaking with the employee. The Division Head (or designee) will then follow-up with the supervisor to determine next steps.

If the employee has been identified as a “contact of a close contact” exposure:

A “contact of a close contact” is defined as someone who has been in contact with someone who was identified as a close contact to a person with COVID-19. In these instances, the employee does not need to self-quarantine unless they develop symptoms or the person identified as a close contact develops COVID-19.

If the employee has tested positive or been diagnosed with COVID-19, the supervisor should:

- If the employee is at work when you are notified, make sure the employee is separated from others and immediately sent home. If remote work is available and the employee requests to work remotely, the employee should be allowed to continue to work.
- Complete the [COVID-19 EXPOSURE SUPERVISOR REPORTING FORM](#) and inform employee that a University Return to Work Coordinator will be contacting them. If the employee is at home, advise the employee to stay home and follow the employee protocols above for their situation; also, find out when the employee was last at work.
- Notify the appropriate Division Head (or designee) and provide information regarding when the employee was last on campus. It is expected that this notification will occur on the same day as confirmation of the positive test result.
- Notify Facilities Management to clean/disinfect the employee's work area [Note: CDC guidance advises that cleaning/disinfecting should not begin for 24 hours from employee's presence; if the infected individual has not been present for 7 days or more, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary besides increased routine cleaning and disinfecting of all high-touch surfaces already in place.]
- Close off areas used by the infected employee, including common areas.
- With approval of the appropriate Division Head, it may be appropriate to advise co-workers of a potential exposure (but do not identify the employee by name). Further advise that they do not need to take any specific action unless notified, but they should continue to monitor their health for the presence of any "Coronavirus Symptoms" and follow the "Prevention" and "Workplace Prevention" practices.
- In unique situations when it is clear that certain co-workers have been potentially exposed as a result of close contact for a prolonged period of time with the affected employee, the supervisor (with approval of the appropriate Division Head) may instruct those co-workers to follow the appropriate "close contact" exposure protocols.
- Prior to allowing the employee to return to work, five days of isolation starting when symptoms began should be completed. Additionally, prior to returning to work, at least 24 hours should have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medication and an improvement in symptoms. An employee's return to work is based on the University Return to Work guidance.
- When returning to work, the employee should wear a face mask while around others for five additional days after completing isolation.
- If you or any of your employees have questions, you may direct them to Trisha Ray at trisharay@email.wcu.edu or 828 227-2522.