

# COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees  
of Southcoast Health

12/22/2020

*Greetings, Southcoast Colleagues.*

## **In this Bulletin, you will find the following:**

- **FAQ:** *COVID-19 exposure, testing and return to work for healthcare workers*
- *The latest on Southcoast's **vaccination program***
- *Updated guidance on **face-shield** cleaning*
- *New videos: **Taking Care of You** and more*
- *Southcoast's most recent COVID-19 **data***

**Please scroll through the entire Bulletin to find these important updates.**

And be sure to visit Southcoast's [COVID-19 Employee Hub](#).

*Thank you.*

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**\*NEW FAQ\*: Exposure, testing and return to work (RTW) for healthcare workers**

**1. How do I schedule a COVID-19 test?**

**A. Schedule a COVID-19 test through MyChart** (preferred method and a new feature); **OR**

**B. Call the COVID-19 Employee Hotline** at (508) 973-4968 for nurse triage and test scheduling

You will receive an email notification from **MyChart** as soon as the results are available.

Please check your **MyChart** to access your results (do not call the COVID-19 Results line, as our COVID-19 Results team is calling *only those who have a positive result*).

Employee Health and our COVID-19 Results team will notify Infection Prevention if a test performed on an employee at Southcoast Health results as positive. Southcoast is required to consider/conduct a tracer to determine if any COVID-19-positive healthcare worker has come into contact with colleagues and/or patients.

**Outside Tests:** *If you receive a positive result from a test outside of Southcoast Health, you have an obligation to notify Infection Prevention.*

During regular business hours, please call Infection Prevention at 508-973-5497. During off hours, send a confidential email to [infectionprevention@southcoast.org](mailto:infectionprevention@southcoast.org).

For urgent needs, off hours, utilize the Page Operator (or SmartWeb) to page the Infection Prevention person on call.

**2. Can I request an expedited COVID-19 test for myself?**

You must request approval for an expedited test through the Incident Command Center (ICC). The ICC number is (508) 973-5801 and is staffed 24/7.

Southcoast Health may deny requests for expedited testing, regardless of reason, if there are insufficient PCR supplies on hand to accommodate the request and/or there is a need to prioritize testing for acutely ill patients. In this instance, the testing swab would be sent to an outside lab for PCR processing.

### 3. How is a close contact/unprotected exposure defined?

Being within 6 feet of a confirmed or clinically diagnosed COVID-19 person for at least 15 minutes, while the person was symptomatic or within the 2 days before symptom onset (or date of positive if they were asymptomatic) **while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (facemask, eye protection), OR**

Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a confirmed or clinically diagnosed COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on) **while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (facemask, eye protection)** or facemask, eye protection, gown and gloves if aerosol generating procedures (AGP) are performed.

In general, if you experience an unprotected exposure, you should monitor yourself diligently for temperature  $\geq 100^\circ$  and any established COVID-related symptoms for 14 days from time of exposure.

**\*\*\*If any COVID-related symptoms develop, do not report to work.\*\*\***

### 4. If I have mild COVID symptoms (with or without exposure to a COVID-positive individual):

*Do I need to get tested before I can come to work?*

Yes, if you have symptoms, you should be tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

*Can I come to work while I await the results of my test?*

No, you cannot remain at or report to work. You must stay home and self-isolate while waiting for test results. While self-isolating at home, you should wear a mask and distance yourself from household members.

You should also notify your manager.

## 5. When can I return to work after absence due to COVID-19?

You can return to work only after you are fever-free for at least 24 hours, your symptoms have improved, 10 days have elapsed since symptom onset (or first positive test) **AND** you receive clearance from Employee Health.

You may end self-isolation on day 11.

When you are ready to return to work, you should submit the information listed below to Employee Health via confidential email at [sc-covidreturn@southcoast.org](mailto:sc-covidreturn@southcoast.org).

- Include “**Return to Work**” in the subject line. **Please DO NOT CALL Employee Health directly.** Please include the following information: first name, last name, DOB, phone number
- Manager name, home department
- Symptoms (please specify all symptoms and the date symptoms began)
- Date of COVID test
- Result of COVID test (positive)
- Dates out of work

You will be contacted by phone and/or email within 24 hours after submitting information.

Southcoast is monitoring and responding to RTW emails every day, including weekends and holidays.

## 6. If I have no symptoms and have been exposed to a household member who has or does not have symptoms and has not yet obtained test results:

### *Do I need to get tested before I can come to work?*

A secondary exposure does not require testing or isolation, just continued self-monitoring. If your household member’s results come back positive, follow the guidelines in question 7 below.

**7. If I have no symptoms but have been exposed to a household member that has tested positive:**

***Do I need to get tested before I can come to work?***

Yes, you must be tested for COVID-19 (antigen test is sufficient).

If the employee test is negative and you remain asymptomatic, you may return to work with Employee Health clearance but must complete quarantine outside of work per guidelines below.

You must continue to quarantine until that clearance:

- Quarantine will be for 14 days if no test is done after household exposure (RTW Day 15)
- Quarantine will be for 10 days after household exposure if test is done within 5 days (RTW Day 11)
- Quarantine for 7 days if test is done day 5 or later (RTW Day 8)

You must continue to actively monitor for even mild symptoms for 14 days from time of exposure. If they develop, you must self-isolate.

***Can I come to work while I await the results of my test?***

No. Because this was not a workplace exposure, you must stay out of work while awaiting the results of your test.

You should also inform your manager and self-isolate. While self-isolating at home, wear a mask and distance yourself from household members.

**8. One of my co-workers tested positive, but that person had no symptoms when I was working with them:**

***If I have no symptoms, do I need to get tested?***

If you meet the definition of close contact/unprotected exposure, then you must be tested for COVID-19 (see question 7).

You must also complete an [ART form](#), which you can obtain from the Employee Health department

Infection Prevention will perform contact tracing in conjunction with unit leadership to identify close unprotected contacts.

***Can I still come to work with test pending?***

Yes, you may work following a workplace exposure if you are not experiencing COVID-related symptoms.

However, you must wear mask and eye protection while working, quarantine when not working and self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days after exposure.

If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, you must stop working and arrange to get re-tested. Please follow the guidelines provided in question 4 above.

**9. If I have side effects after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, do I need to have a COVID-19 test, may I come to work, and are there any work restrictions I must follow?**

<b>Vaccine Side Effects</b>	<b>Testing and Work Restrictions</b>
Injection site reaction or allergic reaction such as itching, rash or hives.	No PCR testing required. No work restrictions.
Less than 3 days after vaccination, mild symptoms such as fever < 101F or mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain.	PCR test required. Able to work wearing appropriate PPE while PCR testing is pending.
Less than 3 days after vaccination, severe symptoms such as fever 101F or higher, or severe headache, fatigue, muscle aches, joint pain, and/or any other	PCR test required. Restricted from working onsite pending COVID-19 test results. Follow up with health care provider recommended

symptoms consistent with COVID-19.	
3 days or longer after vaccination, any symptoms consistent with COVID-19.	PCR test required. Restricted from onsite work pending COVID-19 test results and 24 hours' post-symptom resolution.

For more details, refer to [HCP Vaccination Work Guidance \(12/16/20\)](#) issued by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services.

**Additional Information**

For more details, please also refer to ...

[Return to Work Decision Algorithm for ASYMPTOMATIC Employee 12/22/2020](#)  
[Return to Work Decision Algorithm for SYMPTOMATIC Employee 12/18/2020](#)

**UPDATE: COVID-19 Vaccination Program**



As of this Bulletin, nearly 2,500 Southcoast employees, providers and staff have been vaccinated.

All three hospital vaccination clinics are up and running. For more information, including clinic hours, consent and prioritization, and fact sheets, [please visit the Southcoast intranet](#).

For a video reflection on the first week of rollout, [please click here](#).

*Pictured above (clockwise from top left): Christian Barros, RN, Charlton Memorial (administered by Teri Kinder, RN, Manager of Employee Health); Chief Clinical Officer Dr. Dani Hackner (administered by Teri Kinder), Allison Johnson, RN, St. Luke's ICU (administered by Lori Frazer, RN, Manager of Patient Care, St. Luke's Emergency Department); and Dr. Nancy Meyer, Tobey Emergency Department (administered by Kathleen Shubitowski).*

### **Recommended links:**

['Hope for a brighter future': Southcoast Health nurse is first to receive COVID vaccine](#)

[A 'light on the horizon': Mass. doctor describes being among the first to receive vaccine](#)

[Dartmouth neurosurgeon among first to get Covid vaccine](#)

[Covid-19 vaccine arrives in Wareham](#)

[Watch: Southcoast Health receives COVID-19 vaccine](#)

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### **NEW: Reusable face-shield cleaning**

- Alcohol wipes or Gray Top PDI wipes are the first choice for cleaning face shields, as **they provide disinfection without smearing or streaking.**
  - Remove any visible debris with soap and water
  - Dry with paper towel
  - Unfold clean alcohol wipe/Gray Top wipe and thoroughly wet surface
  - Allow surface to remain wet for 3 minutes

- If you do not have wipes, use a bottled solution of 70% isopropyl alcohol
    - Remove any visible debris with soap and water
    - Dry with paper towel
    - Spray/pour alcohol solution on a paper towel or cloth
    - Use the saturated paper towel or cloth and thoroughly wet surface
    - Allow surface to remain wet for 30 seconds
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## **VIDEO: Taking Care of You**



The holiday season can often be a difficult time for many people to navigate, and this year may be an especially challenging time for some of our valued team members and their families.

That's why Southcoast Health is committed to [Taking Care of You During the Holidays](#) throughout this winter season and beyond – with resources, support and some special offerings to lighten your days and help you stay healthy.

These programs are Southcoast's way of saying thank you. Thank you for coming to work each day, for giving it your all and for helping us provide exceptional care to the community we're proud to call home.

Click the image above or [here](#) for more details.

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## **STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases**

- As of 5pm on December 22, we currently have 105 patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 hospitalized across our system – 14 of those patients are in Intensive Care Units.
- In addition, we currently have 48 patients under investigation (PUI) currently hospitalized across our system – 2 of those patients are in ICU.

COVID-19 daily dashboards, generated by the Southcoast Analytics Team, are available [here](#).

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For testing information, guidance on PPE, hotlines and much more, please visit Southcoast's [new COVID-19 Hub](#) for employees and staff.

Questions? Please email them to [faq@southcoast.org](mailto:faq@southcoast.org).

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*Thank you, and be well.*