

# COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees  
of Southcoast Health

January 6, 2022

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In this bulletin, we clarify the Return to Work (RTW) algorithm, and address your questions regarding the clearance, and concerns regarding access to COVID testing.

## **Return to Work Algorithm – (decision-making, clearance, testing) for fully-vaccinated employees\***

### **Decision Making:**

- **If you think you have been exposed to COVID and DO NOT develop symptoms** – you can continue to work (wear mask, eye protection and monitor for symptoms), until/unless you develop symptoms. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO TEST IF ASYMPTOMATIC.**
  - We continue to have laboratory tests being scheduled, when not warranted, as symptoms are not present. These actions are filling up our testing schedules and over-taxing the laboratory unnecessarily. We understand the desire to know a result, even if not symptomatic, but would suggest a home test be utilized for this purpose.
- **If you think you have been exposed to COVID and have developed symptoms** – you CANNOT continue to work (unless 100% remote and feeling up to it) and must obtain a laboratory test immediately.

*We are unable to accept results from a test taken at home for any symptomatic person. You will need to stay home until you have received your laboratory test result and can determine next steps:*

- If your result comes back Negative, you can go back to work as long as you are fever free (for at least 24 hours) and your symptoms have improved.
- If your result comes back Positive, you must stay out of work for 5 days from the date your test was collected, and can come back on day 6 if

you are fever free (for at least 24 hours) and your symptoms have improved.\*\*

Example: COVID test was collected on Sunday (day 0), Monday-Friday (5 days), return to work on Saturday (day 6)

### **Clearance to Return to Work by Employee Health:**

If you tested positive for COVID or were potentially exposed and subsequently developed symptoms, and you now meet the criteria above to return to work, you must send an email to [SC-Covidreturn@southcoast.org](mailto:SC-Covidreturn@southcoast.org) with the following information:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Test date
- Date symptoms began
- Current symptoms present
- Department and name of your manager

If you have difficulty sending this email, please connect with your supervisor for assistance.

Please know that we have trained staff monitoring this email box 7 days per week, so there should be no delay in your ability to return to work. If you have any concerns, please connect with your supervisor.

### **COVID Testing:**

- You must schedule a COVID Test. MyChart is the preferred method. We have now added testing slots that are dedicated for Southcoast Health employees.
- To ensure your test is processed and resulted accurately, an order and testing appointment are needed in Epic. Swabbing yourself at work, even if you have been trained to swab patients, will result in your test not being run or a delay in testing results.

\* Exempted, non-vaccinated, asymptomatic staff who are exposed may continue to work but are subject to quarantine during non-working hours and testing on Day 5. If symptoms develop, you must obtain Employee Health clearance prior to returning to work. (Please refer to the Return-to-Work algorithms on the COVID Intranet Site.)

\*\*Any health care worker who returns to work prior to 10 days since their first positive COVID-19 laboratory test was taken should avoid caring for patients who are moderately to severely

immunocompromised (example, actively undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy) until after 10 days has passed since their positive viral test.