

COVID-19 Bulletin

 Southcoast Health

Exclusively for the employees
of Southcoast Health

May 13, 2022

Greetings, Southcoast Colleagues.

In this Bulletin, you will find the following:

- **Recap on employee masking in patient and non-patient areas**
- **Return-to-Work (RTW) reminders**
- **Booster shots available at Southcoast employee clinics**
- **STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases**

Please scroll through the entire Bulletin for these updates, and be sure to visit Southcoast's [COVID-19 Employee Hub](#).

Thank you.

Recap on employee masking in patient and non-patient areas

Have requirements changed recently on masking requirements in patient service areas?

Masking is required for employees and visitors entering or working at any clinical location and on hospital grounds, including the White Home and Elizabeth House, and all other locations where patient services are provided.

Please refer to [Southcoast Guidance for PPE Use and Optimization \(updated on March 7, 2022\)](#) for comprehensive information on PPE requirements.

May I remove my mask in non-patient areas?

Guidelines from Massachusetts Department of Public Health for removing face masks requires full vaccination and one booster when eligible. Guidance from the MDPH states only staff who are **up to date** with COVID-19 vaccination* may remove their facemasks when they are in well-defined areas restricted from patient access (e.g., staff meeting rooms, kitchens). In these areas, staff who are up to date with COVID vaccination may remove their masks even when there are others present who have not been vaccinated (e.g., staff exempted from vaccination). Otherwise, masks are required.

*A person is up to date with their COVID-19 vaccination if they have **received all recommended doses in the primary series and one booster when eligible**. Getting a second booster is not necessary to be considered up to date at this time.

Return-to-work (RTW) reminders

When can I return to work if I had COVID-19 symptoms?

A health care worker who had **COVID-19 symptoms and has been isolating** may return to work:

- + after 5 days have passed since the first positive COVID-19 viral test was taken; **AND**
- + **symptoms have substantially improved, including being fever-free, for 24 hours; AND**
- + if fully vaccinated (meaning it has been at least 14 days since receiving at least one dose of J&J/Janssen or two doses of Pfizer or Moderna)^{1, 2}; **AND**
- + if a negative viral test (antigen or molecular) was received on Day 5 or later.
 - **Important note:** At this time, acute-care hospital-based health care workers are not required to receive a negative viral test prior to returning to work after Day 5. However, a viral test on Day 5 or later is best practice and is strongly recommended.

When can I return to work if I tested positive for COVID-19 but have not had symptoms?

A health care worker who has been **asymptomatic and has been isolating** may return to work after 5 days:

- + **If fully vaccinated** (meaning it has been at least 14 days since the health care worker has received at least one dose of J&J/Janssen or two doses of Pfizer or Moderna)^{1, 2}; **AND**
- + **a negative viral test (antigen or molecular) is received on Day 5 or later.**

Once I return to work, are there any restrictions on caring for patients?

Any health care worker who has **tested positive (with or without symptoms) and returns to work prior to 10 days from the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test** should avoid caring for patients who are moderately to severely immunocompromised until after 10 days has passed since their positive viral test.

Are home test results acceptable for return to work?

Yes, health care workers may be cleared for work on the basis of an at-home antigen test.

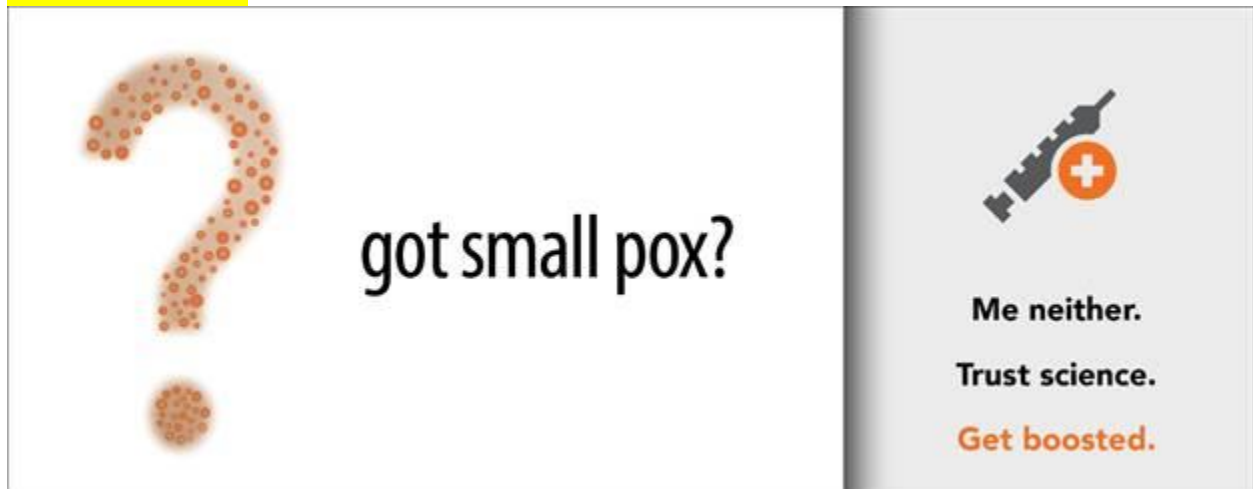
Refer also to:

- [Return to Work Decision Algorithm for Symptomatic Employees 01/20/22](#)
- [Return to Work Decision Algorithm for Asymptomatic Employees 01/20/22](#)

¹ Individuals who are immunocompromised or those with serious COVID-19 illness or requiring hospitalization should wait until 20 days since first positive test and should consult with a provider.

² This recommendation corresponds with CDC's Contingency Staffing Strategies and may be updated once staffing constraints loosen and upon further DPH review.

Booster shots



Get boosted and add another layer of protection! No appointment needed.

Upcoming employee walk-in vaccine clinics:

- + Mon., May 16, Charlton Memorial, Multipurpose Room, 7am - 8am
- + Wed., May 18, Charlton Memorial, Multipurpose Room, 2pm - 5pm
- + Fri., May 20, SCBC, Large Conference Room, 11am - 2pm
- + Wed., May 25, Tobey, Education Room, 2pm - 5pm
- + Thu., May 26, Tobey, Education Room, 7am - 8am

Go [here](#) for COVID-19 vaccination information.

Remember to complete the consent using this link before arriving:
<https://southcoastapps.southcoast.org/covidform>.

STATUS REPORT: COVID-19 cases

As of earlier today, we had 27 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 hospitalized across our system – with 2 positive cases in ICU. In addition, we had 6 PUI hospitalized across our system – with 2 PUI in ICU.

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

Thank you, and be well.