

DO YOUR PART

Help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses like COVID-19 and the Flu.

WHAT TO DO IF A WORKER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 BUT IS NOT ILL (ASYMPTOMATIC)?

Food facilities should follow protocols set by the CDC and DHEC regarding workers who test positive for COVID-19 but are asymptomatic (do not have any symptoms of COVID-19), and follow the guidelines listed below:

CONTACTING DHEC

If a worker tests positive for COVID-19 but is asymptomatic, the workplace supervisor should contact the DHEC Care Line at 1-855-472-3432 for guidance.

- The DHEC Epidemiology Staff will need to know who has had close contact* with the COVID-19 positive worker while they were at the workplace.
- Based on information gathered on the contacts, fellow workers may need to be notified of their possible workplace exposure to COVID-19, while maintaining the confidentiality of the COVID-19 positive worker.

***Note:** *It is important to know that transmission of COVID 19 is more likely between close contacts. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the infected person is released from isolation. Close contacts should stay home and self-quarantine and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure. People who worked with an infected person during the same time period but were not close contacts are at lower risk and should carefully monitor themselves for symptoms for 14 days after the last date of exposure.*

CLEANING AND DISENFECTING THE WORKPLACE

Food facilities should follow the best practice cleaning protocols listed below:

- Increase air circulation in the area, following applicable guidelines for food-service establishments
- Use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning and disinfecting
- Clean and disinfect all areas used by the infected person (for example, work stations, offices, bathrooms and other common areas)
- Clean and disinfect shared electronic equipment (for example, touch screen, keyboard and mouse, remote control) and other shared equipment
- If more than 7 days have passed since the sick person visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary
- Continue routine cleaning and disinfection

It is not necessary to recall or destroy food products that the worker may have handled.

Guidance for disinfecting the workplace after having a worker who tests positive or is ill with COVID-19 is available on the CDC and DHEC websites.

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RETURN TO WORK

Workers who have tested positive for COVID-19 but have not had any symptoms now have two options for discontinuing isolation and returning to work: (1) a **time-based strategy** and (2) a **test-based strategy**.

Time-based strategy

- Workers with laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

At least 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.

Workers can return to work within 10 days from the onset of symptoms **AND** after three (3) days (72 hours) with no fever above 100.4 °F without the use of fever reducing medication.

If they develop symptoms, then the symptom-based or test-based strategy should be used.

Note: *Because symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness, it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.*

Test-based strategy

- Workers with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms and were directed to care for themselves at home may discontinue isolation under the following conditions:

Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

Note: *Because of the absence of symptoms, it is not possible to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness. It has been reported that some individuals continue to test positive for detection of COVID-19 RNA for several weeks or months without evidence that they continue to be contagious during that time period.*

The decision for workers to discontinue isolation and return to work should be made in consultation with their healthcare provider.

Adapted from: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>