

COVID-19 EXPOSURES AND TESTING – EMPLOYEE POLICY

Updated July 20, 2021

A. Positive Test Result

1. All employees who have tested positive for COVID-19 must report their test results to their supervisor and department administrator, and must complete the University's [COVID-19 Reporting Form](#).
2. Clinical employees must also report their positive test results to the infection control office of any hospital where they practice.
3. The return to work criteria for employees who have tested positive are as follows:
 - a. Employees who never experienced symptoms can return to work ten days after the positive test.
 - b. Employees who experience symptoms before or after the positive test result may return to work when **all three** of the following criteria have been met:
 - i. at least ten days have passed since the symptoms first appeared; **and**
 - ii. at least twenty-four hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **and**
 - iii. other symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
 - c. The return to work time duration is extended to 20 days (instead of 10 days) for employees who experienced severe to critical illness.
 - d. The employee's healthcare provider will determine the time and condition of return for those severely immunocompromised.

B. Identifying A Potential High Risk Exposure

1. A high-risk exposure is defined as contact with an individual known to be COVID-positive for greater than 15 minutes, within six feet of the individual, and during which time either the positive individual or the employee were not **both** wearing medical masks (also known as surgical masks or medical facemasks) or N-95 respirators. The individual known to be COVID-positive could be a patient, another health-care provider, or an acquaintance outside of work.
2. In a clinical setting, if the employee performed an aerosolizing procedure without wearing all recommended PPE (gown, gloves, N-95 respirator, and eye protection), **any** duration should be considered a high-risk exposure.
3. If an employee self-identifies a potential high-risk exposure, they must contact the Tulane Living Well clinic (504-988-4325 or WellnessClinic@tulane.edu) for a formal review of the exposure event, to ensure it meets the criteria of a high-risk exposure.
4. If the exposure occurred in the context of direct patient care, the employee should also notify the infection control office of the hospital or clinic where the exposure occurred.

C. Employees With A Potential High-Risk Exposure Who Have Symptoms Of COVID-19

1. The employee must contact the Tulane Living Well clinic for a formal review of the exposure and to arrange for **immediate testing**. **The employee must self-quarantine until the test results are returned.**
2. An employee who receives a positive test result must follow the policy for a positive test result (section A, above).

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3. An employee with a negative test can return to work when both of the following have occurred:
 - a. It has been at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; AND
 - b. other symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
4. The following requirements extend for the full 14 days after exposure, even after a negative test result is received:
 - a. Self-Monitoring: The employee must monitor symptoms daily, including temperature checks with a thermometer. Employees developing symptoms should follow the policy in section C, above “*Employees with a high-risk exposure who have symptoms of COVID-19*”.
 - b. Medical (surgical) masks: The employee must wear a medical (surgical) mask or N-95 respirator while at work or on campus. Cloth face coverings are not appropriate during this time.
5. An employee who has received a negative test but has worsening or non-resolving symptoms may be tested again. Contact the Tulane Living Well clinic for a formal review of the symptoms to determine if a second test is warranted.

D. Employees With A High-Risk Exposure Who Are Not Symptomatic.

1. Evaluation & Reporting: If the Living Well Clinic determines that an exposure has occurred, the employee must notify their supervisor and department administrator. If the exposure occurred in the context of direct patient care, the employee must also report the exposure to the infection control office of the hospital or clinic where the exposure occurred.
 - a. Testing: In most cases, ***regardless of vaccination status***, employees should have a series of two viral tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection. In these situations, testing is recommended immediately and 5–7 days after exposure.
 - b. If symptoms develop before testing has been completed, the employee must follow the policy for employees with symptoms in section C.
 - c. If the test results are positive, the employee must follow the policy for positive test results in section A.
2. Clinical Duties: After exposure, clinical employees who remain asymptomatic may continue their clinical duties but must follow individual hospital protocols for exposed health-care providers, including wearing a medical (surgical) facemask while at work for 14 days from the time of exposure. If their seven-day test is positive, the employee must follow the policy for positive test results in section A.
3. Asymptomatic employees may not return to university owned or controlled non-clinical spaces until a negative test result is received. Exceptions may be granted for certain research/laboratory activities – see section F, below).
4. After a negative seven-day test result is received, and as long as the employee remains asymptomatic, they may return to campus and resume in-person research and administrative duties. The following requirements extend for the full 14 days after exposure, even after a negative test result is received:

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Self-Monitoring: The employee must monitor symptoms daily, including temperature checks with a thermometer. Employees developing symptoms should follow the policy in section C, above “*Employees with a high-risk exposure who have symptoms of COVID-19*”.

- a. Medical (surgical) masks: The employee must wear a medical (surgical) mask or N-95 respirator while at work or on campus. Cloth face coverings are not appropriate during this time.

E. Employees With Symptoms Consistent With COVID-19 Who Are Not Aware Of A High-Risk Exposure

1. The employee is to contact the Tulane Living Well clinic for a formal review of their symptoms and to determine if testing is necessary.
 - a. An employee for whom testing is deemed not necessary can return to work.
 - b. An employee for whom testing is deemed necessary must self-quarantine until the test results are returned.
 - i. Employees with a positive test will follow the policy for a positive test result in Section A.
 - ii. Employees with a negative test can return to work when at least 24 hours have passed since their last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND other symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved.
 - iii. Employees whose symptoms worsen or do not resolve may be tested again. Contact the Tulane Living Well clinic for a formal review of the symptoms to determine if a second test is warranted.

F. Research/Laboratory Exception: If possible, employees involved in research or other laboratory-based activities who have been found to have a high risk exposure (as determined by the Living Well clinic) should work from home until seven-day testing has been completed and a negative test result has been received, at which point they should follow the procedure for asymptomatic exposure in section D. If it is not possible to work from home without significant negative impact to the research/lab work, the employee (or their supervisor) may request an exception from Patrick Delafontaine or Lee Hamm.

1. If an exception is granted, the employee will be tested as soon as possible after exposure, and a second test will be scheduled seven days after exposure.
2. As long as the initial test result is negative, and the employee remains asymptomatic, they may resume their on-campus research and/or laboratory-based activities. Until the second (seven-day) set of negative test results are received:
 - a. The employee must avoid teaching or administrative areas, and should only enter common areas as necessary to access their work space. Employees may not enter the cafeteria or kitchen/break areas.
 - b. The exposed employee **and all other employees working in proximity** must wear medical (surgical) masks at all times.
 - c. Students working in proximity to the exposed employee must have the option, if they choose, to work remotely or in another space until the 7-day negative

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test result has been received.

3. After the second set of negative test results are received, the employee may resume administrative duties and may enter administrative and common areas, but must continue to self-monitor and wear a medical (surgical) mask at all times until 14 days after exposure.
4. Refer to section A to follow the policy for a positive test result, and to section C to follow the policy for development of symptoms.

G. Routine Testing Of Employees

Per University Policies, all Tulane University employees will undergo routine testing on a biweekly basis.