

# Return to Work Criteria for Healthcare Personnel *with COVID-19*

CDC developed guidance related to COVID-19 recommendations for work exclusion for healthcare personnel based on information from the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC). Recommendations for duration of work exclusion for healthcare personnel with SARS-CoV-2 infection are being reviewed as part of updates to the Guideline for Infection Control in Healthcare Personnel. Healthcare personnel (HCP) includes all persons serving in healthcare settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials including body substances, contaminated medical supplies, devices and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air. HCP with even mild symptoms of COVID-19 should be prioritized for COVID testing. [Read CDC guidance on testing for personnel COVID-19 exposure](#). The following is guidance for HCP who have tested positive to return to work. At present, the CDC guidance includes:

## **Mild to Moderate Illness (PO2 $\geq$ 94%) / Not Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised**

- 7 days have passed since date of first positive viral test OR 10 days if testing is not performed OR HCP tested positive on day 5, 6, 7 of infection period, AND
- Resolution of fever (for 24 hours) without the use of fever reducing medications, AND
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved, AND
- Negative test 48 hours prior to return to work.

## **Severe to Critical Illness (dyspnea, R>30, PO2 <94%) / Not Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised**

- 10 days have passed (can be up to 20 days depending on severity of illness) AND
- Resolution of fever (for 24 hours) without the use of fever reducing medications, AND
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved, AND
- Negative test results collected 48 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).



## Immunocompromised Healthcare Workers / Moderately to Severely Immunocompromised

COVID tests can remain positive for even more than 20 days for immunocompromised individuals. Use a test-based strategy and consult with an infectious disease specialist or other expert AND occupational health expert to determine return to work. Include the following criteria:

- SEVEN days have passed since date of first positive viral test OR 10 days if testing is not performed OR HCP tested positive on day 5, 6, 7 of infection period AND
- Resolution of fever (for 24 hours) without the use of fever reducing medications AND
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.) have improved, AND
- Negative results from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected 48 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) tested using an antigen test or NAAT.

*The above information is intended as guidance, referenced from the CDC, and should NOT override the individualized care decisions made between clinicians and their patients. Last reviewed 9/12/2024.*

### Resources

[Interim Guidance for Managing Healthcare Personnel with SARS-CoV-2 Infection or Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)

[Overview of Testing for SARS-CoV-2 | CDC](#)

[Strategies to Mitigate Healthcare Personnel Staffing Shortages | CDC](#)