



To: All Staff
From: Geoff Wood, Director, Human Resources, Organizational Development, Employee Health Services and Volunteer Resources
Date: September 18, 2023
Subject: Return to Work COVID Staff Guidance – CURRENT STATUS

On March 27, 2023 the Ministry of Health released guidelines for COVID isolation, testing and return to work for High-Risk settings, such as acute care. Those guidelines remain in place.

A PCR test is not required to rule out or confirm COVID-19 infection in symptomatic HCWs to return to work.

As per Public Health guidelines staff must contact Employee Health at ext. 2811 if they are experiencing respiratory or gastrointestinal symptoms and follow their department’s regular sick reporting process.

Return to Work Guidance is symptom-based management:

- Respiratory: *symptom improvement and fever-free x 24 hours*
- Gastrointestinal (*nausea, vomiting or diarrhea*): *fever-free x 24hrs and improvement of GI symptoms x 48hrs*
- Contact with a known COVID Positive: *monitor for symptoms and work in work self-isolation x 10 days.*
- Once returning on site, **Work Self Isolation** is required for ten (10) days from symptom onset to mitigate the spread of respiratory viruses. [Click here to view the Work Self Isolation Guide](#)

Staff who have independently obtained a rapid antigen test or PCR test and are confirmed COVID-19 positive must follow the return to work guidance outlined above. Staff testing (PCR/RAT) may be required on a case-by-case basis and for outbreaks under certain circumstances.

Continue to monitor yourself for symptoms and stay home when feeling unwell. Symptoms may include:

• <i>Fever and/or Chills</i>	• <i>Extreme Fatigue</i>	• <i>Runny nose or congestion</i>
• <i>Cough</i>	• <i>Muscle aches or joint pain</i>	• <i>Headache</i>
• <i>Shortness of Breath</i>	• <i>Gastrointestinal symptoms</i>	• <i>Conjunctivitis (pink eye)</i>
• <i>Decreased or loss of smell</i>	• <i>Sore Throat</i>	• <i>Lack of appetite</i>

We have implemented phase one of our mask-friendly approach and the following is in place:

- Masks are **required in clinical areas** (i.e. nursing stations, in patient rooms, and waiting rooms)
- Masks are **not required in nonclinical areas** (i.e. hallways, meeting rooms, breakrooms, the Bistro, and shared offices)
- Staff are required to wear eye protection when a sign on a patient room door indicates they are under additional precautions requiring eye protection
- **Testing of symptomatic inpatients as well as those that present to our emergency department will resume to rule out or confirm infection.** This includes such symptoms as fever, cough, congestion, runny nose, body aches, etc.

We will provide further updates should there be changes to our return to work requirements or our masking practices. Thank you for your continued vigilance in protecting our patients and each other.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Employee Health Services at 519-837-6440 x. 2811 OR employeehealth@gghorg.ca.