



COVID-19 Associate Testing and Return to Work Guidance

Updated: August 28, 2023

COVID-19 Testing for Symptoms

If testing for COVID-19 because associate has symptoms

- Associate is directed to notify their leader that they are testing because they have symptoms of COVID-19 and are awaiting results.
 - Occupational Health (OH) does not notify the leader. This is the associate's responsibility.)
- Associate remains off work pending results—follow home isolation guidance below.

Chat bot and patient portal

- Provided for both positive and negative test results when testing with Medstar.
- Associate will receive a chat bot text message or email (whichever one is selected) with negative OR positive test result. Associates should also check their MedStar Health Patient Portal for results as they may appear more quickly on the portal.
 - Instructions notify the associate to contact their leader and report their test result.
 - [Associates with positive results need to report their results to the Occupational Health Call Center, 1-844-354-3705.](#)
 - Return to work (RTW) guidance is provided based on test result.

Return to Work (RTW) Guidance

Negative Test Result

Associate instructed to notify leader of negative test result and return to work

- If the associate is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, they can RTW at the time the results are provided.
 - Occupational Health Call Center (OHCC) does not notify leaders of negative results. This is the associate's responsibility.
- If the associate has a negative test and does not feel well enough to return to work, follow normal departmental call out procedures.
- If the associate develops **NEW OR WORSENING** symptoms, such as persistent fever (100°F), loss of taste and smell or shortness of breath, contact the OHCC at **844-354-3705** for further screening and directions to re-test.

Positive Test Result

- **Associate instructed to notify leader of the positive test result and to isolate.**
- **Associates who test positive outside of OH must call the OHCC immediately for screening and return to work guidance.**

COVID-19 Associate Testing and Return to Work Guidance

- OHCC will follow up and contact all associates who test positive through OH to screen for MAB treatment, advise of isolation period, and provide RTW clearance.
- OHCC will send an email to the leader advising of expected return to work date.
 - For associates, including providers, who test positive for COVID-19, the isolation period is seven (7) days from onset of first symptom
 - This guidance applies to all associates, including those with a COVID-19 booster, fully vaccinated associates, and unvaccinated associates with approved exemptions to the Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.
 - For symptomatic associates who test positive for COVID-19, the isolation period ends seven days after the onset of symptoms, and 24 hours past the last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, symptom improvement, and feeling well enough to work.
 - For asymptomatic associates who test positive for COVID-19, the seven-day isolation period begins at the time the COVID-19 positive test is conducted.
 - OHCC will provide RTW clearance for all positive tests and notify the leader via email of RTW date.

RTW Example:

DAY 0 = Date of symptoms starting OR date of test result for asymptomatic associate

Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	7 Days Isolation	8 RTW DATE
June 1	June 2	June 3	June 4	June 5	June 6	June 7	June 8	June 9

All COVID-19 positive associates must be cleared by the OHCC for return to work. Associates may call the OHCC on Day 6 or 7 for evaluation to determine if they are eligible for return to work on Day 8.

- If cleared by the OHCC, associates working in Maryland may return to work on day eight without additional testing.
- If cleared by the OHCC, associates working in Washington, D.C., must take a home antigen test on day eight and may return to work if their test is negative. If the test is positive, they can test for the next two days and return to work if the test is negative. Associates with on-going positive antigen tests may return to work on day 11.
Associates must communicate with their leader if their home antigen tests are positive and they are not able to return to work.

**Asymptomatic (No symptoms)
Testing for high-risk exposure**

Associates with positive household member or associates notified of patient/coworker exposure

Testing may be scheduled here: [Access.MedStarHealth.org](https://www.accessmedstarhealth.org) or by calling the OHCC at **844-354-3705**.

Asymptomatic associates should schedule a PCR test or take a home test **immediately, and days 3 and 5**. Asymptomatic associates may continue to work regardless of vaccine status and should notify the OHCC if their test results are positive.

Negative Test Result: Continue to work, continue testing protocol as above

Positive Test Result: Off work immediately. Associate to notify leader of positive test result. Call OHCC if positive test was performed outside of OH.

- An OH representative will follow-up and contact the associate to conduct a short screening and will send an email to the leader that the associate is off work due to positive test, providing expected RTW date.
- OHCC will provide RTW clearance for all positive tests and notify the leader via email of RTW date.

**Symptomatic (With symptoms)
Testing for high-risk exposure**

Do not work pending test results.

Positive household member or referred by contact tracing team for patient/coworker exposure

Negative Test Result

- Associate instructed to notify leader of negative test result and return to work.
- If the associate is fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications, they are able to RTW at the time the results are provided.
 - OHCC does not notify the leader of negative results. This is the associate's responsibility.
- Additional testing (PCR or home test/ antigen) must be completed on days 3 and 5.
- Associate must contact OHCC with any positive test results.

Positive Test Result

- Off work immediately. Associate to notify leader of positive test results.

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- An OH representative will follow-up and contact the associate to conduct a short screening and will send email to leader that associate is off work due to positive test, providing expected RTW date.
 - OHCC will provide RTW clearance for all positive tests and notify the leader via email of RTW date.

Isolation and Home Care Guidance

Associates should follow the steps below while awaiting the results of COVID-19 test.

- **Stay home (in-home isolation).** Do not leave your home unless you need medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas (even the grocery store). Stay away from gatherings (more than 10 people together). Avoid using public transportation (like metro bus or trains), ride sharing (like Uber or Lyft), or taxis.
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people (i.e.; Sharing a room or car).
- Separate yourself from other people in your home. If possible, pick one room in your home and stay in that room and away from other people. Use a different bathroom than other people in your home if you can.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean your hands often. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If there is no soap and water, use hand sanitizer made with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash your hands with soap and water if you can see dirt on your hands.
- Avoid sharing personal household items with other people. This includes things like dishes, drinking glasses, cups, forks, knives, spoons, towels, or bedding. After using, wash them thoroughly.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that people touch often using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Key Reminders

- **If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911**, tell the person on the phone that you were tested for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency workers arrive.
- **If you need to see your healthcare provider for an appointment, call first.** Before going to see your healthcare provider, call them if you can, and tell them that you were tested for COVID-19. When you do go to the office, put on a facemask before you go inside.
- If you need additional advice or have any questions or concerns, contact the Occupational Health Call Center (OHCC) at **844-354-3705**. The OHCC hours are as follows: Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Holiday hours may vary
- Access the MedStar Health Patient Portal at [MedStarHealth.org/myMedStar-Patient-Portal](https://www.medstarhealth.org/myMedStar-Patient-Portal)