

Manager Briefing

Higher Risk Employees

Wednesday 29 April 2020



Process for managing employees who may be at a higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19

- Higher Risk employees are defined by the Department of Health and Human Services and include:
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions
 - Employees 65 years and older with chronic medical conditions
 - Employees 70 years and older
 - Employees with compromised immune systems



What are the identified chronic conditions that place an employee at Higher Risk?

- The following chronic conditions are of concern in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees over 50 years and healthcare workers over 65 years:
 - Chronic renal failure
 - Coronary heart disease or congestive cardiac failure
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Poorly controlled diabetes
 - Poorly controlled hypertension



How is immunocompromised defined?

- Employees at any age with significant immunocompression include those who:
 - Have haematologic neoplasms
 - Are post-transplant
 - Are immunocompromised due to primary or acquired immunodeficiency
 - Are on current chemotherapy or radiotherapy
 - Are on high-dose corticosteroids
 - Are on all biologics and most disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs



What about pregnant employees?

- Not considered to be in the higher risk category.
- Employees who are pregnant are considered potentially vulnerable, particularly after 28 weeks gestation.
- Employees should follow the standard advice – good hand hygiene, physical distancing, have the flu vaccination.
- Assess the risk of the environment that they are working in – take measures to reduce the risk.



What about pregnant employees (cont.)?

- Recommend that pregnant employees complete the screening checklist.
- Each case will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- From 28 weeks gestation consider alternative duties and patient allocation.
- If unable to work from home or be reassigned to a safe workplace – may be entitled to ‘paid leave – no safe job leave ‘until a suitable reassignment opportunity is found. The Enterprise Agreement will determine entitlement.



What should potentially Higher Risk employees do?

- Complete the screening checklist.
- Managers must not complete screening checklists on behalf of employees.
- You may support your employee in completing the checklist, if the employee requests your assistance.
- Email the completed checklist to COVID19employeeenquiries@monashhealth.org.
- Support the checklist with evidence (medical certificate or statutory declaration) where required.
- Employees who are Higher Risk will be required to follow this process, irrespective of any existing leave or work arrangements.



What happens after an employee completes the screening checklist?

- Completed checklists will be reviewed and it will be assessed if the employee is:
 - Higher Risk of serious illness from COVID-19 and
 - If the area they are working in places them at low/high risk of contracting COVID-19.
- Initial review will be conducted by a nursing panel.
- If nursing panel requires additional advice, they will forward the checklist for assessment by the Clinical Panel.
- If additional information is required during the assessment, the nursing/clinical panel will contact the employee and/or their treating physician.



What happens after an employee completes the screening checklist? (Contd.)

Assessment Outcome	Communication	Required Changes
Employee is not Higher Risk	Employee informed through email	No changes required to current work arrangements
Employee is Higher Risk + working in a low risk area	Email to manager and business partner, copying the employee	No changes may be required to current work arrangements. Make sure they are aware of infection control and PPE guidelines.
Employee is Higher Risk + working in a high risk area	Email to manager and business partner, copying the employee	Manager and business partner to identify best and safest available option in discussion with the employee



What should the employee do while the checklist is being assessed?

- Aim to complete assessments within 48 hours.
- Ideally, employees should remain in their roles while this is completed.
- However, if employees have immediate concerns, address them accordingly.
 - Consider WFH, moving the employee to a safe environment to perform their work.
 - As a last option - employees may take personal, annual or long service leave.



What are the options available to protect employees identified to be at higher risk and who are currently working in areas that are considered to be high risk?

- The manager and business partner must explore the following options:
 - Is the employee able to perform their role from home?
 - Is the employee able to perform the same or related work in a safe environment?
 - Can a flexible working arrangement be established?
 - Is the employee able to be reassigned to another role?
- If an employee cannot work from home, establish a flexible working arrangement or be reassigned to a safe workplace the will be entitled to paid special leave for up to 20 days (pro-rata for part-time employees).



What are the next steps if reassignment is recommended?

- Manager and business partner will consult with the employee to discuss experience and skills and identify areas the employee may be suitable to work in.
- Manager must complete the Workforce Reassignment Notification (SharePoint survey).
- Manager requests employee to complete the Workforce Mobilisation Profile.
- Workforce Mobilisation Team will contact you and the employee to try and reassign the employee to a suitable area.



Personal Leave – personal sick leave

- Where an employee is ill (Covid-19 or another illness) and is absent from work.
- ‘Higher risk’ employees who are unwell or whose underlying medical condition prevents them from working.
- ‘Higher risk’ employees who have exhausted the 20 days paid Special Leave (can also use annual leave).

Managers should enter SICK LEAVE – with or without certificate or COVID LVE – SICK LEAVE in Kronos as appropriate



Annual Leave and Long Service Leave

Applications for annual leave and long service leave must be agreed with the manager.

- 'Higher risk' employees who have exhausted the 20 days paid Special Leave (can also use Personal/Carer's leave).
- Employees who have refused a reasonable reassignment to alternative duties.
- Employees who want to stay home as a precaution.



Information relating to the process

- 'Higher Risk Employees' page on COVID-19 website:
 - Screening checklist
 - FAQs
 - Process flow
- Employees may email COVID19employeeenquiries@monashhealth.org for support with completing the checklist.
- Information relating to reassignment available via COVID-19 website.



Questions?