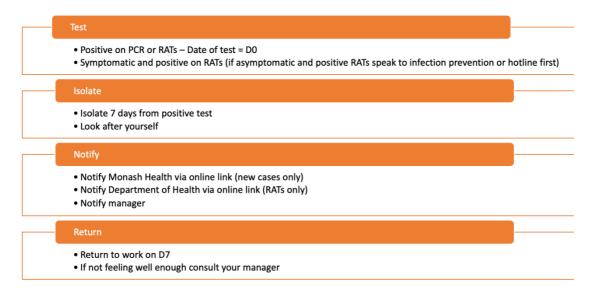# Employee Fact Sheet Series
COVID-19 infection and you

As community transmission of COVID-19 increases, the likelihood of becoming infected also grows. This information sheet provides you with advice on what to do if you have tested positive, and how best to look after yourself and those around you.

This guide has been developed for employees who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and have mild to moderate symptoms. If you have no symptoms, or your symptoms are mild to moderate, it is usually safe to isolate and care for yourself at home.

If you have more severe symptoms, you should seek medical advice by calling your GP or Nurse On Call on 1300 606 024 (available 24/7) or call the number provided to you by your care pathway or local health service.

If your health rapidly deteriorates or if it's an emergency, please immediately call triple zero (000) or go straight to hospital. Make sure you tell them you have COVID-19.

Test
- Positive on PCR or RATs – Date of test = D0
- Symptomatic and positive on RATs (if asymptomatic and positive RATs speak to infection prevention or hotline first)

Isolate
- Isolate 7 days from positive test
- Look after yourself

Notify
- Notify Monash Health via online link (new cases only)
- Notify Department of Health via online link (RATs only)
- Notify manager

Return
- Return to work on D7
- If not feeling well enough consult your manager

Please note: Day 0 is the day you undertook the test.

What to do if you test positive for COVID-19

Your first priority is your health and wellbeing. COVID-19 can be a serious illness.

The Symptom Checker is a useful resource to understand COVID-19 symptoms: https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker/tool/basic-details

If your COVID-19 symptoms are severe or worsen, contact your GP or call the Department of Health hotline on 1800 675 398 open 24/7.

Reporting a positive test result

If you test positive for COVID-19, please let your manager know and complete our online COVID-19 Positive Notification Form.

If you received a positive result using a RAT, you also need to notify the Department of Health using their COVID-19 Positive Rapid Antigen Test Self-Reporting Form.

You must also tell your household and household-like contacts as soon as you can. They are people you have spent more than four hours with in a house, care facility or accommodation without appropriate PPE in place.

It's very possible to catch COVID from someone in much less than four hours, so have a think about people you have spent time with in the 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms, or the time of your first positive test (if asymptomatic).

What is required of close contacts

A close contact is anyone you have spent more than four hours with inside a house, accommodation or care facility without appropriate PPE in place.

Information for close contacts who are not Monash Health employees can be found at https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts.

If any of your close contacts are Monash Health employees and have no symptoms, they can attend work provided they:

- Notify their managers and complete the Monash Health Close Contact Form
- Undertake daily RAT testing for five days
- Wear an N95 while on-site and have breaks alone

If any of your close contacts are Monash Health employees and have symptoms, they can return to work if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They have received a negative PCR test
- Their symptoms are improving
- They have not experienced a fever in the past 24 hours

They must:

- Notify their manager and complete the Monash Health Close Contact Form
- Undertake daily RAT testing for five days
- Wear an N95 while on-site and have breaks alone.

If their PCR test returns a negative result, but their symptoms are not improving or worsening, they should not attend work, and take another PCR test.

What if they have symptoms but have tested negative?

If any of your close contacts are Monash Health employees who have tested negative for COVID-19 and their symptoms are improving or completely recovered, they may be able to return to work.

They may return to work if they meet all of the following criteria:

- They have received a negative PCR test
- Their symptoms are improving, or they are feeling better (no muscle aches and pains, no headache, improving cough, etc.)
- They have not experienced a fever in the past 24 hours

They must wear an N95 while on-site and have breaks alone until their symptoms are resolved.

If their PCR test returns a negative result, but their symptoms are not improving or worsening, they should not attend work, and take another PCR test.

Isolating at home

If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 you must isolate to prevent the spread of infection. Isolating when you are infectious – which means that you have the virus and can transmit it to others – protects your family, friends and the wider community from COVID-19. Isolation is a public health requirement.

Isolating involves staying at home unless you need to leave to get medical care, a PCR test or if you feel unsafe in your home.

If you live with others, isolating means living in a separate, well-ventilated room away from other people in your household as much as possible. If your housemates continue to stay in the house, they will be required to isolate as well.

If you cannot isolate in a separate room:

- avoid shared spaces in the house as much as possible
- wear a mask when moving through shared areas
- wipe down any surfaces you touch
- if you can, use a separate bathroom that others do not use. If you share a bathroom, wipe down any surface you touch and flush the toilet with a closed lid.

Other people should not enter your home unless they are providing necessary medical or personal care, or are emergency service workers.

You will need to arrange for food and other essential items to be delivered to your home during this period of isolation. You may be able to ask a friend or neighbour to assist by bringing essential items to your door.

The Victorian Government has a number of financial, accommodation and food support services available to people who require help while in isolation. More information is available here https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/isolation-and-quarantine-extra-help-and-support

While you are at home, regularly monitor your symptoms using the [Symptom Checker](#).

The most up to date advice on how isolate effectively at home can be found here
https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/managing-covid-19-home

Stopping the spread

The virus spreads between people who are in close contact, through respiratory droplets and airborne particles that are generated when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes.

The measures you follow at home to prevent the spread are much the same as those practised in a hospital setting, namely:

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly
- Wear a face mask (preferably an N95) whenever in contact with other people
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, especially those you might not normally think to, such as light switches, door handles and taps
- Reduce clutter, which in turn will make cleaning easier
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow

How to manage your symptoms

It is important to monitor your symptoms, with many GPs advising patients to keep a daily symptom diary. This will make it easier for you to identify worsening symptoms, and to provide background on your condition if required with a medical professional.

Most people with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms. The most commonly reported symptoms include:

- fever
- fatigue
- loss of taste and/or smell
- respiratory symptoms
    - coughing
    - increased phlegm or sputum.

Other symptoms associated with COVID-19 can include:

- headache
- sore throat
- mild shortness of breath
- muscle or joint pains
- runny nose
- chills
- intermittent nausea/vomiting
- intermittent diarrhoea

It is important to ensure you have plenty of rest, drink lots of water and eat well. If you feel well enough, it is possible to undertake moderate exercise within the confines of your home and/or garden.

You should consult your GP about what medications may be needed to manage your symptoms. Paracetamol and ibuprofen medications can be used to manage symptoms and for pain relief if required.

Severe symptoms

If you develop severe symptoms, you may need additional help. If the symptoms worsen substantially or rapidly, or if it's an emergency, immediately call triple zero (000) or go straight to hospital.

Severe symptoms include:

- worsening shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- blue lips or face
- pain or pressure in the chest
- cold and clammy, or pale and mottled, skin
- fainting or collapse
- being more confused
- becoming difficult to wake up
- little or no urine output – less urine than usual, even though you have been drinking lots of fluid
- coughing up blood.

Managing your mental health

Being isolated can have an impact on your mental health and there are a number of ways to support your health during isolation. Some tips include:

- remind yourself that isolation is temporary, and helps others by reducing the spread of the virus
- stay in touch with family, friends and loved ones
- try to keep to regular sleep patterns and healthy foods
- if you are well enough, try to maintain physical activity
- establish an isolation routine, and focus on the benefits of this period of isolation
- use the time to try something new
- if you can while remaining in isolation, spend time outdoors

Ending isolation

The day you undertook your test is Day 0.

You may end your isolation on Day 7. There is no need to take a further test, and you may return to work if well enough to work.

Some people may feel anxious after they are allowed to leave their home again after being isolated with COVID-19. Some people find it hard to be around other people again. You can be confident that you are no longer infectious after your period of isolation has been completed and the local public health unit has confirmed you are safe to leave your home.

Further information from Monash Health

If you need further information from Monash Health, call the Employee COVID-19 Hotline on 8572 5610, 7am to 8pm, seven days a week for advice. Keep an eye on our https://coronavirus.monashhealth.org/ webpage, Chief Executive Updates and iNews bulletins for the latest information.

Other useful resources

https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/

https://www.health.gov.au/health-alerts/covid-19/protect-yourself-and-others

https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/healthdirect-coronavirus-covid-19-symptom-checker

https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/