

# COVID-19 Exposure, Infection and Return-to-Work Frequently Asked Questions

## Exposure:

### **My spouse/child/roommate/friend/etc...was in contact with someone who was positive. What do I do?**

If you are the “contact of a contact,” then there is nothing further you need to do. Monitor for symptoms and present to a VUMC Assessment Site if you develop fever, cough, shortness of breath, sudden loss of sense of smell/taste (without other neurologic symptoms), diarrhea, headache, sore throat, muscle aches, or chills.

Employees at **Vanderbilt Wilson County Hospital** should contact the Employee Health office in the Quality Building or call Retha at 615-443-2581.

### **I live with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 and I cannot isolate from them. What should I do?**

If you were exposed in the community or at home, complete the survey for household or community exposures for 14 days (even if allowed to end quarantine earlier than this) from when you were exposed: <https://www.vumc.org/health-wellness/news-resource-articles/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-monitoring-employees>.

If you are not able to isolate from the positive household individual (e.g., a small child), your quarantine begins after the infected individual meets the following criteria:

- 10 days from the positive test,
- fever-free without fever-reducing medicine for 24 hours, and
- their symptoms improve.

Once you begin your quarantine, if you are **asymptomatic** on Day 7, Occ Health will notify you via the daily symptom monitoring survey that a COVID-19 test order has been placed and **you need to get tested at a VUMC testing site** (see below for locations). If your test is negative, Occ Health will notify you to return to work.

If you become **symptomatic**, you need to get tested at a VUMC testing site. If your test is negative, you will need a second test ordered by Occ Health before you can return to work.

### **My coworker tested positive. What do I need to do?**

Exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

- while the individual is symptomatic
- during the 48 hours leading up to symptoms
- 48 hours before positive test in an asymptomatic individual

If you were not in close contact with the individual, then we would not consider the encounter an exposure.

Occupational Health reaches out to either the employee who tested positive or the supervisor of the area where the positive patient was evaluated. They will obtain a list of individuals who meet the criteria of “exposure.” If you are on that list, you will receive a survey for 14 days from the day of exposure and you should submit a First Report of Injury via [VERITAS](https://veritas.vumc.org) (veritas.app.vumc.org). Answers provided in the post-exposure REDCap survey will help assess significance of exposure and any additional guidance.

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If you do not receive an email invitation but feel strongly that you were exposed, please call Occupational Health at 615-936-0955 or send an e-mail to [occupational.health.clinic@vumc.org](mailto:occupational.health.clinic@vumc.org) with your name and phone number. (Please do not send any personal medical information via e-mail).

Individuals who are deemed “exposed” can work but must wear a surgical/procedure mask (not a cloth mask) for 14 days from exposure. The REDCap post-exposure survey will guide this recommendation.

## **I was exposed to someone in the community. What do I do?**

If you were exposed in the community (and do not live with the individual who tested positive), complete the survey for household or community exposures for 14 days from when you were exposed. You can continue to work. You must wear a surgical/procedure mask for 14 days from exposure: <https://www.vumc.org/health-wellness/news-resource-articles/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-monitoring-employees>.

## **Do I need to get tested if I was exposed?**

Currently, VUMC is not testing asymptomatic individuals immediately after an exposure to a person with COVID-19 with the exception of the testing that allows a shortened quarantine for household contact exposures noted below.

If you have been exposed, a negative test does not preclude a positive test further along the 14-day incubation period. If you are asymptomatic and get tested (by Metro Public Health Department, for example), you may be at work while awaiting test results. Also, lab results obtained at Tennessee Department of Health assessment sites will not appear in eStar and will be handled by TDH.

If you are symptomatic and are awaiting test results, you must remain home until the test result comes back. If your test is negative, you can return to work as long you have been fever-free for 24 hours without a fever-reducing medication. If you have respiratory symptoms, you should wear a surgical/procedure mask when at work. If you tested positive, you must remain at home. If you tested at VUMC, Occ Health will call you. If you tested outside of the VUMC system, please upload your outside test result at: <https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=CACNP8CW3C>.

Once you begin your quarantine if you remain asymptomatic, on Day 7, Occ Health will notify you via the daily symptom monitoring survey that a COVID-19 test order has been placed and you need to get tested at a VUMC testing site. If your test is negative, Occ Health will notify you to return to work.

## **I am pregnant/immunocompromised. Do you have special recommendations?**

We do not have a specific policy; however, it is even more important for you to follow the general recommendations of meticulous hand hygiene, not touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, wearing a mask when in public, and social distancing. Pregnant, immunocompromised, or other employees with high-risk conditions can call Employee & Labor Relations to discuss exemptions and accommodations at 615-343-4759 or email [employeerelations.vumc@vumc.org](mailto:employeerelations.vumc@vumc.org).

# COVID-19 Exposure, Infection and Return-to-Work Frequently Asked Questions

## Can I get tested if I have no symptoms (asymptomatic)?

### Asymptomatic Testing – For Work-Related Reasons:

For work-related reasons, such as a quarantine clearance test, employees may receive asymptomatic testing for COVID-19. An order for the test will be placed by the Occupational Health Clinic.

### Asymptomatic Testing – For VUMC International Travel:

Employees may receive asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 through the Occupational Health Clinic. Please call 615-936-0955 to schedule an appointment.

### Asymptomatic Testing – For Non-Work-Related Reasons:

For non-work-related reasons, VUMC employees and their household members may receive asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 at the following VUMC locations:

**Vanderbilt Executive Health & Wellness Clinic** located at 302 Royal Oaks Boulevard, Franklin, TN during the hours of 1:00-3:00 pm on Tuesday and Thursday and 9:00 am-12:00 pm on Friday. It is recommended that family members use this location to receive asymptomatic testing.

**VUMC Medical Center East Ambulatory E-Pod**, located on the second level of the East Garage (adjacent to the front entrance of Medical Center East). Testing is available at this location during the hours of 1-3 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday and 8 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday.

- ❖ Asymptomatic testing for non-work-related reasons will include a fee of \$100 per test, only payable by credit card. The Medical Center will not bill any insurance for the test. The asymptomatic tests will be processed by the PathGroup, an outside lab. Typical turn-around time is 24-48 hours for asymptomatic test results.

**Free Asymptomatic COVID testing** continues to be available through the Metro Health Department's drive-thru locations Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Metro testing sites are located at:

Nissan Stadium Lot "N", 1 Titans Way, Nashville, TN 37213  
Meharry Medical College, 918 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37208  
Former Kmart, 2491 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN 37217

## I have symptoms of COVID-19, what do I do?

If you have new-onset (i.e., within the past week) symptoms outlined above you should present to a VUMC Assessment Site for further evaluation. You should not come to work as outlined above.

## Where are the VUMC Assessment Sites?

The Ambulatory E-Pod is an Assessment Site located on the second floor of Medical Center East (MCE) Garage (northeast corner) on the main VUMC campus. This is a designated employee only Assessment Site open every day (8am-5pm). Note: Do not utilize the "Emergency Department E-pod," which has a private gate marked with a yellow X.

Other VUMC sites include the Vanderbilt Health Walk In Clinics and Vanderbilt Health Clinics at Walgreens. Locations can be found at [My Health Walk-In Clinics](https://myhealthwalkin.com) (myhealthwalkin.com).

## My results are pending, can I work?

- If you are symptomatic and were tested for COVID-19, you need to stay at home until those results come back.
- If you went for testing but do not have any symptoms, you may return to work.

# COVID-19 Exposure, Infection and Return-to-Work Frequently Asked Questions

## Post-Infection & Returning to Work

### I tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

You will need to be home for at least 10 days from when you tested positive.

- **If you tested outside of the VUMC system,**
  1. If you tested outside of the VUMC system, please upload your outside test result at: <https://redcap.vanderbilt.edu/surveys/?s=CACNP8CW3C> Occupational Health will then call you to follow up and review next steps regarding return to work.
  2. Contact Occupational Health at 615-936-0955 or [occupational.health.clinic@vumc.org](mailto:occupational.health.clinic@vumc.org) if you don't have documentation or if you have other questions or need assistance. (Do not send personal medical information via email).
- **If you tested within the VUMC system,** Occ Health will call you. Occupational Health will call you again 10 days after your test date to determine whether you can return to work or need further evaluation.

Most employees (but not all) will be able to **return to work** if the following criteria are met:

- It has been at least 10 days from when you tested positive.
- You have been fever-free without fever-reducing medication for 24 hours.
- You have overall improvement in your symptoms.

### I tested positive and meet the requirements for returning to work. However, I live with someone who has also tested positive.

If you meet criteria to return to work and are cleared by Occupational Health, you can return. The CDC recommends that if you are within 3 months of your positive test, recovered, and are now asymptomatic or your symptoms are improving you do not need to quarantine from the new positive contact. Please adhere meticulously to hand hygiene between home and work.

### Before, if an employee tested positive, they needed two negative tests to return to work. Now they are saying that's no longer true. What changed?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently updated its guidance and VUMC is following those recommendations to return health care employees to work. Data is showing that by day 10 after the initial positive test, even if someone continues to test positive, the result is reflective of viral fragments that are not capable of infecting others.

### Before, if an employee lived with someone who tested positive, the employee had to stay home from work for at least 14 days. Now employees with household exposures are being asked to test on day 7 of their quarantine if they are asymptomatic. What changed?

On December 2 the CDC updated the [When to Quarantine](#) guidelines shortening the quarantine period for 14 days to 7-10 days because studies demonstrate minimal chance of spread after day 7. Consequently, VUMC has now updated their guidelines to reflect that a workforce member who has an exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 positive household contact are able to return to work after quarantining for 7 days **IF** they have: developed no COVID-19 symptoms and the workforce member has a confirmed negative SARS-CoV-2 PCR test.

# COVID-19 Exposure, Infection and Return-to-Work Frequently Asked Questions

**I live with someone who has tested positive and have remained asymptomatic. Occupational Health has ordered a SARS-CoV-2 PCR test for me. What happens next?**

If your COVID+ household contact has been able to fully self-isolate away from you, you will be ordered a COVID-19 test that should be collected on Day 7:

**If result is negative**, the employee is allowed to return to work with surgical/procedure masking at all times until Day 15 after exposure. Then, on Day 15, employees can continue to wear surgical/procedure masks or convert to a fabric mask per current VUMC general masking guidance.

- A negative test at Day 7 does NOT rule out development of active COVID-19 infection. Employees should continue to mask and self-isolate as much as possible.
- They must also not remove their mask (such as for eating/drinking) if around others until Day 15
- If symptoms develop after a negative test, leave work immediately and repeat testing.
- Employees are not allowed to work in myelosuppression or transplant units/clinics until Day 15 after last household exposure.
- Return to work tests ordered by Occ Health will be billed to your insurance. If you feel that the exposure was related to work, please complete a VERITAS.

**If I was exposed at work, can I get tested to shorten my quarantine period?**

Asymptomatic testing for employees after a workplace exposure is not available at VUMC assessment sites or through Occ Health. Asymptomatic testing can be obtained for free through the Metro Health Department testing sites through the Metro Health Department's drive-thru locations Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Metro testing sites are located at:

**Nissan Stadium Lot "N"**, 1 Titans Way, Nashville, TN 37213

**Meharry Medical College**, 918 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37208

**Former Kmart**, 2491 Murfreesboro Pike, Nashville, TN 37217

VUMC is offering asymptomatic testing at the following locations. Note: Asymptomatic testing for non-work-related reasons will include a fee of \$100 per test, only payable by credit card. The Medical Center will not bill any insurance for the test. The asymptomatic tests will be processed by the PathGroup, an outside lab. Typical turn-around time is 24-48 hours for asymptomatic test results.

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