

EMPLOYER GUIDE TO SCREENING & TESTING



Considerations for returning to the worksite

As employers evaluate how to best create a safe working environment to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, it is important to understand the role both testing and symptom checking can play.



COVID-19 TESTS

PURPOSE

Detect the presence of the disease

WHEN TO USE

When an individual exhibits symptoms or has confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19

FREQUENCY

As needed

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Antigen and PCR /molecular diagnostic tests can diagnose the active COVID-19 infection at a moment in time. Even with a negative virus test, people may still have the virus (i.e. false negative) or become symptomatic at a later date.
- Serology tests detect the presence of antibodies produced after exposure to the virus. However, it remains uncertain whether individuals with antibodies are protected against reinfection with COVID-19, therefore the CDC does not recommend serology tests to determine when it is safe for a person to return to work.
- The continued strategy and reinforcement of screening, hygiene, social distancing and masks are critical.



RETURN-TO-WORKSITE SCREENING

PURPOSE

Evaluate the presence of symptoms

WHEN TO USE

Symptom Checking can help employers determine the risk of an individual entering a worksite location.

FREQUENCY

Daily

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Daily screenings can help an employer evaluate the presence of symptoms across their workforce, for the purposes of determining who should enter the worksite on a particular day.
- If symptoms are identified, an individual should follow protocols established by the employer and/or consult with a health care provider. Note that if individuals have been exposed to COVID-19, they may be able to spread the virus even though they do not experience symptoms early in the infection.
- The strategies outlined above should be combined with social distancing, mask utilization and vigilant hand washing/sanitizing in order to be effective at limiting COVID-19 transmission in the workplace.



KEEPING YOUR WORKFORCE SAFE:

Maintaining a safe work environment will require ongoing safety practices, as recommended by the CDC, OSHA, and state and local guidelines. For additional return-to-worksite resources please visit:

<https://www.cigna.com/coronavirus/employers/working-during-covid>

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) research center at University of Washington Medicine provides health data in real-time of key COVID-19 metrics: <https://covid19.healthdata.org/united-states-of-america>





COVID-19 TESTS

TEST TYPE/TOOL	USE	ADMINISTRATION	LENGTH OF VALIDITY	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Antigen	Active infection	Swab	24 hours	Results typically delivered in 15 minutes. Not as accurate as PCR/molecular testing
PCR/molecular diagnostic	Active infection	Swab	24 hours	Results typically delivered in 1-5 days
Serological	Previous infection	Blood Test	Longer validity if presence of antibodies is confirmed	Not clear if antibodies confer immunity; can be inaccurate when COVID-19 prevalence in the community is low

A note about coverage: Covered by Cigna (without cost sharing through 1/15/2022) for diagnostic purposes. Must be FDA approved or Emergency Use Authorized (EUA), and CLIA lab-analyzed. Physician order recommended.



RETURN-TO-WORKSITE SCREENING

TEST TYPE/TOOL	USE	ADMINISTRATION	LENGTH OF VALIDITY	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Symptom and exposure questionnaire including temperature check	Presence of symptoms/potential infection (non-diagnostic)	App or web-based prior to arriving at worksite or worksite entry	Daily (work day) or until an employee exhibits symptoms	Employer has daily snapshot of employee health. Can be anonymous or identified with employee consent.
Entry temperature check		Temperature screening at entry points or as needed based on symptoms		

A note about coverage: Most standard benefit plans do not cover tests being conducted strictly for employment reasons (e.g., employment drug screenings, return-to-worksites), therefore COVID-19 tests performed for return-to-worksites purposes will generally not be covered. The intention of the CARES Act legislation is to provide relief of cost share and coverage for people seeking medical care due to concerns/symptoms of COVID-19. It requires that commercial health benefit plans (including employer sponsored plans) waive customer cost share for certain COVID-19 testing during the public emergency period. The CARES Act does not pay for testing costs or cost share, nor does it cover testing for return-to-worksites purposes. Additionally, several tests promoted by vendors or online may not have FDA approval and would not be covered.

For a list of FDA Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) tests, please visit: <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/emergency-use-authorizations>

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