



What to Do if Your Employee Has COVID-like Symptoms After Receiving Vaccine, Tests Positive for COVID-19 or Experiences a Close Contact

Revised and restated February 25, 2021

Our **BEST** outcome is to avoid the need to use the steps outlined below by protecting our employees from exposure to or infection by the virus. The best way to achieve that outcome is to **always practice social distancing and follow masking protocols**.

If one of your employees experiences COVID-like reaction after receiving the vaccine, is confirmed as having COVID-19, or experiences a 'CLOSE CONTACT' use the following information to guide your actions. As always, contact HR with any questions and thank you for your leadership in this important area.

COVID-LIKE SYMPTOMS / SIDE EFFECTS AFTER VACCINE

We know that some people will experience COVID or flu-like symptoms after receiving their vaccine. These are more likely after the second dose of a two-dose vaccine. Because the vaccine takes up to two weeks to achieve its maximum efficacy, it's hard to know if this is an actual COVID infection or just vaccine side effects. Thankfully, we've received guidance from Central District Health about how to manage these situations.

We are asking Supervisors to help manage these situations per the guidance below, and HR is always available to help.

First, here's the science behind our approach:

- True post-vaccine reactions appear within 72 hours after vaccination (if the reaction begins more than 72 hours after receiving the vaccine, we should assume its COVID or some other illness)
- True post-vaccine reactions generally last no more than 48 hours (if the reaction lasts longer than this, we should assume its COVID or some other illness)
- True post-vaccine reactions do not include new loss of smell or taste (if these symptoms are present, we should assume its COVID or some other illness).

Guidance on post-vaccine side-effects / symptoms

- A. If symptoms began before vaccination, regular protocols for COVID symptoms apply (**HR must be informed to manage the return to work**)
- B. If the symptoms began within the first 72 hours after vaccination, employee should stay home until cleared*; they can be cleared to return to work **if** the symptoms last less than 48 hours **and** there was no close contact (**Supervisor should work with ELT lead to manage this return to work; there's no need to involve HR if all the conditions are met, but you are welcome to ask for help**)
- C. If all requirements of B are not met, our regular protocols for COVID symptoms apply. Employee must stay home per our regular protocols until cleared by HR (**HR must be informed to manage the return to work, and may consult with local health districts on how to manage the case**)

For 'B', proof of vaccination is required (e.g. copy of vaccination card).

*** Please see page 4 for guidance on work from home and leave options**

POSITIVE TEST RESULTS

This is a time for **sensitivity** and **humanity**. When the employee brings you the news, **express sympathy**.

- They are likely to be **anxious** about what might happen or whether they might have spread the virus to their family or coworkers.
- Let the employee share their feelings. As you talk with them, clearly communicate that they can count on you and the team to be supportive.
- **Example**: “I know this is a scary thing to deal with. I’m here for you if you need to talk, and I understand that you may not be able to work for a little while. Don’t worry about that, I understand what you’re dealing with.”

1. Ask the employee for the following information:

- When did the symptoms start?
- When was the employee last at work?
- When was the employee tested and when did they receive their test results?
- Which coworkers has the employee been in “close contact” with and when in the prior two weeks. (Note: The CDC defines a “close contact” as someone who has “been within six feet of the infected employee for a cumulative period of 15 minutes or more within an hour.

2. Instruct the employee to stay home* and to consult their health care provider. IYR may require a written authorization from the employee’s healthcare provider before the employee returns to work.

3. Next, contact HR. You need to act quickly to minimize the risk of the disease spreading.

- Based on the information provided by the employee, HR will help you assess the information provided by the employee to determine the time window when infection might have occurred, and which coworkers should be notified.
- Decide whether you or HR should **communicate* with the close contacts** the employee named and who you and HR decide were **at risk of infection**.
- This is a sensitive topic, **so alert those coworkers by phone as soon as possible. Time matters** - if you can’t reach them personally, email them with “important action required” in the subject heading.
- You may have other employees who work in the same area who you and HR have determined were not in “close contact” with the employee who tested positive, but who are frightened about their possible exposure to the virus and wish to self-quarantine or be tested. HR will assist those staff members with their testing and leave options.
- **Confidentiality is critical.** You should tell everyone who was possibly exposed to the positive employee at work without revealing that employee’s identity.
- **Here is the message to share with employees who may have been exposed:** “Someone in our workplace has tested positive for COVID-19, and they have identified you as a close contact according to the CDC definition. We are here to support you. If you are at work, please prepare to leave as quickly as you can. Once you get home - or if you are already working from there - find a place to self-isolate (the CDC recommends 14 days since last exposure), monitor yourself for any symptoms, and talk to your doctors. You may also seek a COVID-19 test to determine if you have been infected. HR will help guide you on your testing options. How can I support you in doing all this?”

*** Please see page 4 for guidance on communication & work from home and leave options**

CLOSE CONTACTS

Employees who were identified as “close contact” will have different quarantine requirements depending on several factors including their vaccination status:

- Close contact employees who are “fully vaccinated” are NOT required to quarantine if they meet all three of the following criteria:
 1. They are fully vaccinated (meaning it has been 14 days or more since they received their second dose of the vaccine in a 2-dose series, or it has 14 days or more since they received their dose of a single-dose vaccine); and
 2. They are within 3 months following receipt of the last dose in the series; and
 3. They have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure

HR will confirm eligibility and inform the supervisor of its determination. HR will require proof of vaccination.

- Close contact employees who are not fully vaccinated must stay at home* (quarantine), and their quarantine period will be determined as follows:
 1. They may end their quarantine after Day 10 following their exposure **if** they have had no symptoms during daily monitoring while they were in quarantine **and** they have been cleared to return to work by HR. No testing is required under this option.
 2. They may end their quarantine after Day 7 following their exposure **if** they are tested on the 6th or 7th day of quarantine and receive a negative result **and** they have had no symptoms during daily monitoring while you were in quarantine **and** they have been cleared to return to work by HR.
- People in the close contact group will likely be nervous and ask a lot of questions*. They may ask you if their family is at risk. **Don’t speculate.** You are not a doctor. **Refer them to their own physician and to the CDC website. Keep their spirits up and reassure them** that the company, and you, will be supportive.
- **Follow up this conversation by email and CC HR.** It’s likely the person you talked to was feeling overwhelmed and didn’t catch everything you said. A written follow-up is always good practice as it documents the conversation that occurred.
- **Note:** An employee may report having been in close contact with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 but is not another IYR employee. In these cases, we will follow the above protocol, including evaluation of whether close contact occurred and self-isolation and testing, if appropriate.

*** Please see page 4 for guidance on communication & work from home and leave options**

COMMUNICATING WITH TEAM / OTHER EMPLOYEES

Once you have spoken with both the employee who tested positive and their identified close contacts, **the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) lead and/or HR will determine how to communicate the situation with other IYR employees.**

- Those communications will **respect the confidentiality of both the positive-tested employee and anyone in the close-contact group.**
- Example: “An IYR employee tested positive on [Date] and is now self-isolating. The close contacts have been told and were asked to leave the workplace and self-isolate. If you were not already told you were a close contact, then you are not one. If you have questions about Covid-19 or your situation, please call your doctor and look at the CDC website. IYR is here to support everyone during this difficult time, and we all send our best wishes to the people affected.”
- **As soon as possible clear the work area of all employees until the physical spaces where the infected employee or other potentially infected employees worked are thoroughly sanitized.** The Facilities Team can help with this requirement.
- **A senior leader, including the CEO or other ELT member should check in on employees affected by COVID-19.** These calls will help affected employees feel cared for during a difficult time.

EMPLOYEE WORK FROM HOME AND LEAVE OPTIONS

Employees who are required to quarantine may have questions and/or concerns about the impact on their pay. Please use the following to guide your conversation with your employee. If helpful, HR can also speak with the employee to explore their different option:

Work from home: If the employee is physically able to continue working, working from home may be an option that would allow the employee to continue to earn their normal pay. The supervisor should explore this option with the employee, if viable, and consult with their ELT member and/or HR for assistance.

If working from home is not a viable option, or the employee cannot or does not want to work from home, the employee should:

- Use any remaining Federal FFCRA Leave, if qualified and this program is still available to be used;
- Then use any remaining PTO or vacation;
- Then use any remaining sick leave.
- If the employee has no other leave available or chooses not to use available paid benefits, they will be in an unpaid status.

Thank you for your continued attention and dedication to keeping our workplaces safe. We will continue to do our best to provide you with the best information available to help you lead and support your team and maintain a safe workplace for all. If you have any questions about this information, please contact HR.

REMEMBER: It is **CRITICAL** that we **practice and enforce social distancing** at all times!