RETURN TO LABORATORY RESEARCH

Plan for Testing of Symptomatic Employees
and Mandatory Contact Tracing for U-M Lab Contacts

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University of Michigan Ann Arbor research personnel working in-person, on campus, who test positive for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 (defined as a Viral PCR test) https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764238, will be included in a mandatory Workplace Contact Tracing Protocol to assist in identifying coworkers who may be at higher risk due to working in close proximity to a positive case. This Protocol builds on State Public Health Code and Federal Guidelines in an effort to reduce transmission of the virus across the campus. This policy applies to all U-M employees re-engaging in research activities working in-person, on the Ann Arbor campus. Failure to comply with this policy may result in closure of a laboratory or disciplinary actions to the employee.

Contact Tracing is a public health tool that has been used for decades to identify people who have come in contact with an SARS-CoV-2 positive individual in an attempt to reduce the spread of a disease. It will be used at the University of Michigan to:

- Alert coworkers who may have been in close contact of the potential exposure;
- Offer testing to coworkers with exposure; and
- Identify localized outbreaks and ultimately control the spread of illness across campus.

Medical confidentiality and privacy will be maintained. Contacts will only be told they have been exposed to a positive case, but the identity of that case will NOT be directly revealed. Sensitivity to individual situations will be maintained.

The identification of potential cases in employees can occur through several mechanisms, including:

- Positive screen upon building entry;
- Symptomatic employee call to OHS COVID Hotline (734 764-8021 - Option 1);
- Testing referral from Occupational Health Services (OHS);
- Testing at University Health Service (UHS), if referred from EHS; or
- Testing at a non-U-M healthcare facility.

TESTING OF SYMPTOMATIC EMPLOYEES

Symptomatic employees should contact the OHS COVID Hotline. If the employee is referred for SARS-CoV-2 testing and tests positive, this result is communicated to the employee (note: at this time the CDC recommends a viral test to diagnose acute infection, not an antibody test) and OHS will provide follow-up instructions and return to work guidance. The employee will also be provided with status information to give his or her supervisor and a notification process for other employees. Contact tracing will be coordinated between OHS, UHS and Environment, Health & Safety (EHS).
Symptomatic employees who are tested and diagnosed at a location other than one designated by OHS must report their test type and diagnosis to OHS. They must also report their expected absence to their supervisor and should NOT return to their workplace until cleared by OHS to do so.

Positive test results are shared with the EHS team, Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD), and with Risk Management. Positive tests will be tracked daily by Risk Management and provided to OVPR for reporting and will not be made part of the employees’ central personnel record.

FOR SUPERVISORS

Supervisors may be notified by an employee that they have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, and that they will not be returning immediately to work. This information should be held in confidence by the supervisor. Supervisors can anticipate that other employees may have heard about, or suspect that, someone is out sick with the COVID-19 related illness. They will understandably have concern when they hear about a colleague who is ill. There will be concern for the colleague as well as concern over a potential exposure risk to themselves or others. Supervisors may acknowledge that there is an individual in the unit who has tested positive for COVID-19, without identifying the individual. Supervisors may also inform employees that guidance is being sought from the EHS and OHS to determine if there is indication for them to be tested or quarantined as a precautionary measure and they will be contacted individually if there is potential personal exposure.

CONTACT TRACING FOR LAB CONTACTS

If a lab employee tests positive for SARS-CoV-2:

- EHS will contact and confidentially interview relevant personnel in order to identify potential coworker exposures based on work locations, work schedule, job tasks, COVID symptom onset, and other factors as necessary.
- EHS will identify the lab coworker “lab contact”(s) of the SARS-CoV-2 positive employee.
  - Lab coworker “Lab Contact”: Defined as working on the same shift, or for at least one day in the past 3 days, and in the same lab space / room. This does NOT apply to other lab workers on the floor, nor those in the building or others who may have had contact outside of the lab. All employees are encouraged to monitor symptoms.
  - EHS will document if the Lab Contact interview noted they were symptomatic.
- EHS emails “Lab Contact” members (typically 1-3 people), copying UHS and Risk Management, indicating they may have had a lab contact exposure and should proceed as follows:
  - Lab Contact with symptoms: Call OHS COVID Hotline. Employee required to get testing before returning to work.
  - Lab Contact without symptoms: Call UHS for testing (734-764-8320). Testing is strongly encouraged, but not required; i.e. the employee who was the lab contact may refuse the option of testing. If testing is refused they will need to self-monitor at home for 14 days before returning to work.
- If the Lab Contact tests negative and does not have symptoms:
  - They should self-monitor for symptoms until 14 days after the last potential exposure.
○ Can return to work after a negative test.
  ● If the Lab Contact tests positive, see below.

**COVID-19 positive employees**

*With* symptoms, should not return to work until:

  ● **Symptom-based strategy**
    At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**, at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

*Without* symptoms, should not return to work until either:

  ● **Time-based strategy**
    10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test. Note: Because symptoms cannot be used to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness, it is possible that the duration of viral shedding could be longer or shorter than 10 days after their first positive test.

  ● **Test-based strategy**
    Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized COVID-19 molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens). Note: Because of the absence of symptoms, it is not possible to gauge where these individuals are in the course of their illness.

Testing for research personnel working in-person at OHS will be covered under Workers' Compensation. Testing at UHS for referred lab contacts from EHS would first be submitted to insurance, then any non-covered charges will be covered by U-M.

**References:**

https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2764238

