

HCRS Staff Illness Protocol

For symptoms outside of your baseline (i.e., not including allergies or symptoms due to ongoing health issues)

Quick Reference Guide

Day 0

The date of a positive COVID test or onset of contagious symptoms
(or whichever one came first)



If You Have Symptoms of COVID or any Contagious Illness

- Isolate at home.
- Complete the online Staff Illness Worksheet and notify your supervisor.
- While continuing to isolate at home, take a COVID antigen test on day 1 and day 2.
- If both tests are negative, you may return to work once symptoms have improved and you've been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing meds.
- Once you are able to return to work, take a COVID antigen test that morning to confirm you're still negative and return to work wearing a face mask through **day 10**.
- If symptoms persist beyond **day 10**, contact the COVID Line.
- If you test positive for COVID at any point, see section below.

For more info, see pg. 2



If You Have a Possible Exposure to COVID-19

- Complete the online Staff Illness Worksheet.
- No need to quarantine.
- Regardless of vaccination status or recent infection, wear a quality (non-cloth) face mask.
- Take a COVID antigen test on days 5 and 6 following exposure.

Test Results are Negative

Continue wearing a face mask through **day 10**

Test Results are Positive

Follow instructions below for positive test

If COVID symptoms develop at any time, see instructions on left.

For more info, see pg. 6



If You Test Positive For COVID-19

- Isolate at home immediately.
- Complete the online Staff Illness Worksheet and notify your supervisor.
- **If you can work remotely** without impacting client care, isolate through **day 10**.
- **If you cannot work remotely and you feel well enough**, isolate for 5 full days and begin testing on the first day symptoms start to improve but no earlier than day 5 (test on day 5 if asymptomatic).
 - Test each day until you have 2 negative test results 24 hours apart, at which point you may return to work, wearing a mask through **day 10**.
 - If you do not get 2 negative test results, isolate for the full **10 days** and return to work on day 11 (no need to test on day 10 or 11 or wear a mask after **day 10**).
- **Severe symptoms:** If you were hospitalized or have a weakened immune system, consult with your doctor about when to end isolation.

Per the CDC - Regardless of when you end isolation, avoid being around people who are likely to get very sick from COVID until at least day 11.

For more info, see pg. 5

HCRS COVID Line:
HRCovid19@hcrs.org

Isolation: Keeps someone who is sick or has tested positive for COVID away from others, even in their own home.

Quarantine: Keeps someone with a possible exposure to COVID away from others - separating and restricting their movement to see if they become sick.

For More Info: See protocol details on the following pages.

HCRS Staff Illness Protocol

Welcome to Our Illness Protocols

HCRS prioritizes the health and well-being of our entire community. Therefore, it is essential that staff follow these guidelines. The various sections of this document are outlined on the right.

Note: It is now up to each staff member to determine when they can return to work/their work location based on the protocols within this document.

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If You Have Symptoms of COVID or any Contagious Illness

HCRS' goal is to provide a safe work environment that is free from contagious illnesses such as COVID-19, the flu, and even the common cold. As such, we are now requiring that any staff member with contagious symptoms outside of their normal baseline (not including symptoms of seasonal allergies), follow the protocol (*on right*):

Ill staff, whose position allows them to, may work from home if their symptoms are not severe. Staff who are too sick to work, or who are unable to work from home, should use their available sick time until they've met the above requirements. (See COVID pay code section on pg. 8 for more info)

If you are not feeling well, we encourage you to not work remotely and get the rest you need so you can get better as quickly as possible. We offer a generous sick time policy so that you can take the time you need.

Contagious Illness Protocol

- Isolate at home.
- Complete HCRS' online Staff Illness Worksheet for instructions based on the following:
 - Take a COVID antigen test on Days 1 and 2.
 - If both tests are negative and you feel well enough, you may return to work as long as symptoms have improved and you've been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing meds.
 - Once you are able to return to work, you will take a COVID antigen test that morning to confirm you're still negative and can return to work wearing a face mask through Day 10.
 - If symptoms persist beyond Day 10, contact the COVID Line.
 - If either test is positive, see the COVID-19 section.
- Connect with your supervisor.

See pg. 8 for how to obtain an antigen test

HCRS' online Staff Illness Worksheet (located on our intranet page or by clicking: <https://hcrs-mail.hcrs.org/staffonly/covidworksheet.asp>)

*Staff who have **medical** questions will need to contact their health care provider.*

Day 0

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Flu Season & the Flu Vaccine

The flu is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious illness, hospitalization, or even death. The best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against the flu is to get the flu vaccine every fall. The CDC recommends that everyone six months or older get an annual flu vaccine by the end of October.

We fully respect the right of staff to decide whether or not to get a flu vaccine. We also respect the rights of our staff to be able to work in a safe and healthy environment. And we respect the rights of our clients to expect we're doing all we can to ensure their health and safety. Lastly, we feel it's important to do the right thing, even if it takes us out of our comfort zone.

Our primary goal is to ensure our staff, our clients, and our communities remain safe and healthy. We also want to ensure that we can continue to meet the needs of our clients. Therefore, we have implemented this below vaccine protocol.

If you get the flu:

- Isolate at home
- Complete HCRS' Staff Illness Worksheet (*see pg. 2 for protocol*).

We encourage you to not work remotely and get the rest you need so you can get better as quickly as possible.



Staff who do not obtain the flu vaccine will need to wear a face mask at all times during flu season to protect the people we serve and one another.

HCRS 2022/2023 Flu Vaccine Protocol

We strongly recommend that all staff receive the flu vaccine by October 31, 2022.

The vaccine is free for staff enrolled in HCRS' health insurance program and can be obtained at in-network pharmacies (bring your insurance card with you) as well as from your doctor's office. Many other health insurance plans also cover the cost of the vaccine.

Those staff who are unable or unwilling to obtain the vaccine for any reason, will need to wear a face mask 100% of the time throughout flu season (November 1 – April 1), regardless of worksite location, in order to prevent the spread of illness.

Staff may use available sick time to obtain their flu shot during work hours.

All staff, regardless of whether or not you receive the flu vaccine, are required to complete our Flu Vaccine Declaration form by October 31. The form can be found in UltiPro.

Due to the importance of getting the flu vaccine, we're pleased to announce that every staff member who gets the flu vaccine and uploads verification into UltiPro by October 31, 2022 will receive a \$50 gift card to Giftogram by November 4, 2022. We're pleased to be able to offer this gift card option as it can be used at hundreds of stores and can be provided to all staff regardless of whether or not you are enrolled in our health care plan.

COVID-19

Vaccines & Boosters

According to their website, “The CDC recommends that people ages 12 years and older receive one updated (bivalent) booster if it has been at least 2 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine dose, whether that was their original vaccine or an original booster.” The CDC also recommends that people who have received more than one original booster also receive one updated (bivalent) booster.

COVID Vaccine Protocol

Effective December 15, 2021, all staff are required to have received the COVID-19 vaccine.

All new hires must provide documentation of being fully vaccinated before their start date.

Staff who do not obtain the bivalent COVID booster will need to wear a face mask at all times to protect the people we serve and one another.

See details on right.

COVID-19 Related Symptoms

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

COVID Booster 2022/2023 Protocol

As of October 14, 2022, **HCRS is strongly encouraging staff to obtain the updated (bivalent) COVID booster** by October 31, 2022. The bivalent booster provides protection from both the original form of COVID-19 as well as the Omicron variant. These boosters were authorized in September 2022 and are produced by both Pfizer and Moderna using mRNA technology.

In order to protect your health and well-being as well as that of our clients and each other, we are strongly recommending that staff obtain this updated COVID booster. We are not requiring the booster at this time, however, **anyone who does not receive the bivalent booster and provide documentation to HCRS by November 1st, will need to wear a mask at all times when at work.** This mask requirement will continue until at least April 1st, at which time we will re-evaluate this protocol.

Exceptions:

- Staff who have recently had COVID will not be required to get the booster or wear a mask for 3 ½ months after testing positive for COVID. You're eligible for the bivalent booster after 90 days from getting COVID, at which time – following a 2 week grace period - you'll need to start wearing a mask if you don't receive the updated booster.
- If you recently obtained the original COVID vaccine or original (non-bivalent) booster, you'll need to wait 2 months from the date of your vaccine or booster before obtaining the bivalent booster. Plus you'll have an additional 2 week grace period to obtain the new booster or start wearing a mask.

Documentation of the bivalent booster, recent infection or vaccination, or declination of the bivalent booster will be recorded by all staff in UltiPro by October 31, 2022.

COVID-19

Positive Test



If You Test Positive For COVID-19

- Immediately go into isolation at home.
- Complete HCRS' online Staff Illness Worksheet (located on our intranet page or by clicking: <https://hcrs-mail.hcrs.org/staffonly/covidworksheet.asp>) for instructions based on the following COVID positive protocol:
 - Staff will notify their supervisor.
 - If positive staff member can work remotely without impacting client care, they will isolate through Day 10.
 - If you cannot work remotely and feel well enough, you will isolate for 5 full days and begin testing on the first day symptoms start to improve but no earlier than Day 5 (test on Day 5 if asymptomatic).
 - Test each day until you have 2 negative test results 24 hours apart, at which point you may return to work*, wearing a mask through Day 10.
 - If you do not get 2 negative test results, isolate for the full 10 days and return to work* on Day 11 (no need to test on Day 10 or 11 or wear a mask after Day 10).
 - **Severe symptoms:** if you were hospitalized or have a weakened immune system, consult with your doctor about when to end isolation.

* Staff person may not return to work unless they've been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication AND their symptoms have improved.

In the case of a crisis staffing situation, staff may be required to return to work sooner than outlined above, as allowed by the Vermont Department of Health, with a daily antigen testing regimen.

HCRS' online Staff Illness Worksheet (located on our intranet page or by clicking: <https://hcrs-mail.hcrs.org/staffonly/covidworksheet.asp>)

Staff who have *medical* questions will need to contact their health care provider.

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Tips for Managing COVID in the Home

from the World Health Organization

- Identify one member of the household to be the care-giver, as needed
- Prepare a separate room or isolation space; encourage person with COVID-19 to stay in the isolation space and out of common areas; use separate restroom, if available
- Open windows when you can
- Keep visitors away
- Everyone in the household should wear a medical grade mask when it's absolutely necessary to be in the same room
- Wash hands frequently
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces twice a day at a minimum

COVID-19

Primary Exposure



If You Have a Primary Exposure to COVID-19

There's no need to quarantine unless you start to have symptoms.

- Regardless of vaccination status or recent infection, wear a quality (non-cloth) face mask.
- Take a COVID antigen test on days 5 and 6 following exposure.
 - If test results are negative, continue to wear the face mask through Day 10.
 - If test results are positive, see section above.
- If you start to experience symptoms at any time, refer to the staff illness section on pg. 2.

If a Member of Your Household has COVID

We recommend daily COVID antigen tests before coming to work, although tests are only required on Days 5 and 6.

Remember Others May Be At Higher Risk

If you've had an exposure, or are living with someone who tested positive, consider those around you who may be at higher-risk and may appreciate a more conservative approach.

Tips for Managing COVID in the Home

from the World Health Organization

- Identify one member of the household to be the caregiver, as needed
- Prepare a separate room or isolation space; encourage person with COVID-19 to stay in the isolation space and out of common areas; use separate restroom, if available
- Open windows when you can
- Keep visitors away
- Everyone in the household should wear a medical grade mask when it's absolutely necessary to be in the same room
- Wash hands frequently
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces twice a day at a minimum

What is a Primary Exposure?

- Spending more than 15 minutes indoors within 6 feet of an individual with COVID when you're not wearing a mask.
- Spending more than an hour in the same room with an individual with COVID regardless of distance and masking.
- We urge you to be conservative when determining whether or not you've had a primary exposure. If you're not sure, it would be better to follow the below protocol and ensure those around you are protected.

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When Face Masks are Recommended or Required

Medical grade face masks (surgical, KN95, N95, or other medical masks) are one of the key preventive measures that are available to help reduce transmission of many types of contagious illness. Therefore, we have the following face mask protocols in place for the protection of the HCRS community:

Client Request	Any client may request that their provider wear a face mask during their appointment or services at any time.
High COVID Levels in Windham or Windsor Counties	<p>If Windsor and/or Windham Counties move into the orange (high) level of COVID transmission based on the CDC map, all staff will need to wear a medical grade face mask (surgical, KF94, KN95, N95, or other medical mask) when indoors unless they are in their own workspace where they are able to maintain physical distancing of 6' or more. This means that staff will not be allowed to eat together at HCRS sites. However, DS staff may eat with clients as part of their standard services. Staff are to eat the maximum distance that is safely possible from the client(s) they are supporting and minimize the amount of time they have their mask off.</p> <p>As long as both Windsor and Windham counties remain in the green or yellow levels, staff will have the option of whether or not to wear a mask, unless the client prefers that they wear one.</p> <p>The CDC's COVID transmission levels map by county is available at the following link: https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view?list_select_state=all_states&list_select_county=all_counties&data-type=CommunityLevels</p>
Contagious Symptoms	Staff who have had symptoms of any contagious illness will wear a face mask while working through Day 10. <i>See pg. 2 for details.</i>
COVID-19 Exposure	Staff who have had a primary exposure to COVID-19 will wear a face mask while working through Day 10. <i>See pg. 6 for details.</i>
COVID-19 Infection	Staff who have tested positive for COVID-19 and are able to return to work prior to Day 10, will wear a face mask while working through Day 10. <i>See pg. 5 for details.</i>
Staff Without a Flu Vaccine	Staff who do not receive the flu vaccine will be required to wear a mask during the flu season (November 1 - April 1). <i>See pg. 3 for details.</i>
Staff Without a Bivalent COVID Booster	Staff who do not receive the updated bivalent COVID booster by November 1, will need to wear a face mask until at least April 1. <i>See pg. 4 for details.</i>

The use of Face Masks is optional except when required above, and we encourage anyone who feels more comfortable to wear one at their discretion.



Other Helpful Guidance

COVID Pay Code

Staff may use the HCRS COVID Pay Code for COVID Isolation or Quarantine, assuming they are unable to work from home and have no more than one week of available sick time.

Facility/Room Restrictions

As long as both Windsor and Windham counties remain in the green or yellow level (per CDC map mentioned above), there are no restrictions on our breakrooms, exercise room in Springfield, and all other spaces.

If we move into the high (orange) level per the CDC map, staff meetings and other activities such as yoga will go virtual (via zoom). *Link to CDC map provided on pg. 7.* In that case, staff will also be unable to eat together and the Springfield exercise room will be restricted to one person at a time.

Embedded Staff

School-based or other staff based in the community should follow the COVID-19 protocols for their site relative to quarantine and isolation.

Working Together

We recommend that all teams and staff have open communication with each other to ensure everyone's comfort levels with masking and distancing are being met. We have developed a list of tips for having these conversations in an effective manner (*see pg. 9*).

Questions?

Contact your supervisor or the HCRS COVID Line at HRCOVID19@hcrs.org. Note: The COVID/Infection Control Line is not monitored during non-office hours or on weekends.

How to Obtain a COVID Booster: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/vaccine> or visit the State website where you live.

Where to Get Antigen Tests: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing> or contact the COVID Line.

HCRS' online Staff Illness Worksheet (located on our intranet page or by clicking: <https://hcrs-mail.hcrs.org/staffonly/covid-worksheet.asp>)

Definitions

Day 0: The date of onset of contagious symptoms or a positive COVID-19 test (or whichever one came first)

Primary Exposure:

- Spending more than 15 minutes indoors within 6 feet of an individual with COVID when you're not wearing a mask.
- Spending more than an hour in the same room with an individual with COVID regardless of distance and masking.

Isolation: Keeps someone who is sick or has tested positive for COVID away from others, even in their own home.

Quarantine: Keeps someone with a possible exposure to COVID away from others - separating and restricting their movement to see if they become sick.

HELPFUL PHRASES

"What COVID precautions would help you to feel most comfortable?"

"What COVID precautions would you like me to use when we meet together?"

"As part of planning for our work together, it is important for us to decide together on mask wearing, location, and social distancing."

"I am happy to wear a mask to ensure you feel comfortable."

"As we prepare to work together, it is important that I know your COVID-19 vaccination status. Can you tell me if you are fully vaccinated or not so we can decide how to safely work together?"

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR VACCINATION STATUS

We suggest something along the lines of the following:

"All HCRS staff are required to be vaccinated against COVID so that you can feel as comfortable and as safe as possible receiving in-person services."

If you have concerns about sharing this information, please connect with your manager to discuss other appropriate ways you may respond.

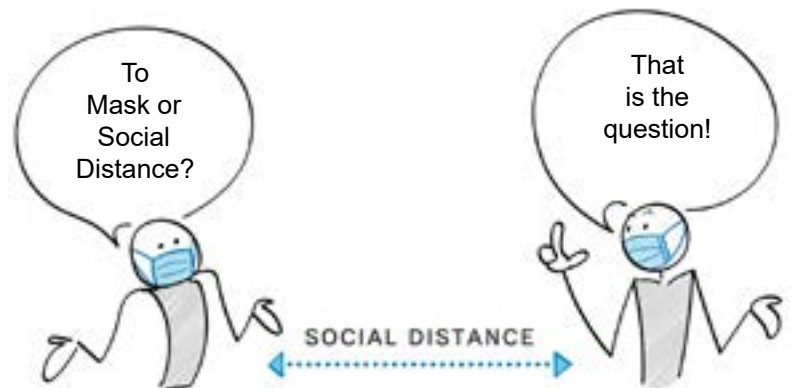
HCRS TIPS

for Conversations about

PPE &

DISTANCING

As developed by Kate Lamphere



AVOID

"You don't want me to wear a mask, do you?"

"Don't worry, I am fully vaccinated so I don't need to wear a mask."

HELPFUL TIPS

- Try for mutual decision making and solution finding.
- Have the conversation before the first in person meeting.
- If the conversation can't be had before the meeting, prepare to wear a mask or face covering to the first appointment and then have the discussion (while masked).
- Remember, difficult conversations are part of our job and you are helping the people around you to practice advocating for their needs.