

Return to work following exposure or COVID diagnosis

Updated 26 April 2022



Western Health

COVID - 19

Be Safe -- Be Smart -- Be Kind

What is this QRG about?

This QRG provides guidance to managers, staff and students about the requirements to return to work after testing positive or being exposed to COVID. Staff and managers should read this guidance carefully and apply the appropriate recommendations to their situation. Provided the conditions are met, **staff may return to work immediately and may not require any further approval or authorisation.**

Where staff are uncertain as to their circumstances or whether they meet the requirements, they should contact the COVID Staff Enquiries via this link <https://survey.wh.org.au/redcap/surveys/?s=AFAFPP473D> for further guidance.

Categories

Category	Requirements to return to work	Additional Precautions
<p>Social contacts</p> <p>Workplace contacts</p> <p>Education contacts</p> <p>These are contacts that take place in a social context (outside of the home or similar residential address), at work or in education settings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Perform a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) immediately and return to work if result is negativeSurveillance Testing Requirements: Complete daily RATs for 5 days	<p>Staff returning to work on site MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Be asymptomaticWear an N95 mask at work for 14 days from exposureNot share break areas with mask off for 14 days from exposure
<p>Close contacts (Household and Household-like contacts)</p> <p>The staff member lives with another person who is COVID positive</p> <p>or</p> <p>The staff member has spent >4hours with a person diagnosed with COVID in a residential setting such as a home or staying in a hotel*</p> <p><i>* Note contact for >4hrs in other settings such as restaurants, parks or other venues are considered 'social contacts'. Refer to above category</i></p>	<p><i>Staff who are close contacts can continue to work provided they meet the criteria below.</i></p> <p><i>See criteria here</i></p> <p>Staff are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Perform a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) immediately and may return to work if the result is negativeSurveillance Testing Requirements: Complete daily RATs on return to work for 10 days and return	<p>Staff returning to work on site MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Be asymptomaticWear an N95 mask at work for 14 days from exposureNot share break areas with mask off for 14 days from exposure

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	a negative result prior to attending work	
<p>COVID positive staff</p> <p>(includes staff who test positive on either PCR or Rapid Antigen Test*)</p> <p><i>*Note: although not mandatory, staff who test positive on a RAT are strongly recommended to have a PCR test to confirm their result</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isolate for 7 days from first positive test. For example, if you had the test on a Monday (Day 0), you would leave isolation any time the following Monday (Day 7). Staff can return to work on day 7 if they have no symptoms of COVID-19, without the need for a RAT. Staff with any persisting symptoms between day 7 and 14 can return to work if they feel well enough once they return a negative RAT. Immunocompromised staff can return to work from Day 7 if they have a negative RAT. Staff who do not meet these criteria by day 14 should contact RACDR@wh.org.au for advice 	<p>Staff returning to work on site MUST:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear an N95 mask at work for 14 days from their first positive test Not share break areas with mask off for 14 days from first positive test

Staff identified as close contacts (household and household-like)

From 23 April 2022, people who are identified as close contacts (household or household-like) are no longer required to quarantine. Western Health staff who identify as close contacts (household and household-like) are required to:

- Agree to meet the working conditions outlined below
- Notify their Manager that they are a close contact (see process to be followed in [Appendix 1](#))
- Be ASYMPTOMATIC
- Undertake daily rapid antigen testing (RAT) and return a negative result prior to attending work, until and including day 10 following exposure
- Wear an N95 mask at all times when in hospital or healthcare-related buildings for 14 days from exposure
- Not enter a shared indoor break area without wearing an N95 mask for 14 days from exposure

Staff should refer to the Victorian Government website for additional requirements outside of the workplace, including mask wearing requirements: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-contacts#checklist-for-household-contacts>

Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) and Test Kits

ALL Western Health staff who complete a RAT as part of surveillance testing, or to guide return to work, are required to report their RAT result. Results should be entered via the following link:

<https://survey.wh.org.au/redcap/surveys/?s=XPJJF39A8R>

WH staff can access RAT kits at each Western Health site. See specific details via the microsite:

<https://coronavirus.wh.org.au/covid-testing-clinics-and-staff-enquiries/>

APPENDIX 1: Manager's checklist for staff who identify as a Close Contact

COVID positive staff cannot attend the workplace. They must inform Western Health Contact Tracing and COVID Staff Enquiries when they test positive (PCR or rapid antigen test) via this link <https://survey.wh.org.au/redcap/surveys/?s=AFAFPP473D>

Social Contact	Return to work under the following conditions	Next steps for Managers
Social contacts Workplace contacts Education contacts	The staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must return a negative RAT <input type="checkbox"/> Must be asymptomatic <input type="checkbox"/> Must wear an N95 at all times (unless they are in their own office, alone, with the door closed) <input type="checkbox"/> Must not enter a shared indoor break area without wearing an N95 mask <input type="checkbox"/> At the slightest onset of symptoms, will advise their manager and leave the workplace to obtain a PCR test <input type="checkbox"/> Must complete daily RATs for 5 days (test kits can be collected from the staff screening clinics) 	Staff can automatically return to work as long as conditions are met. No exemption required
Close Contact	Return to work under the following conditions	Next steps for Managers
Household and Household-like contacts	The staff member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Must return a negative RAT <input type="checkbox"/> Must be asymptomatic <input type="checkbox"/> Will undertake daily rapid antigen testing (RAT) and return a negative result prior to attending work, until and including day 10 following exposure <input type="checkbox"/> Must wear an N95 at all times (unless they are in their own office, alone, with the door closed) <input type="checkbox"/> Must not enter a shared indoor break area without wearing an N95 mask <input type="checkbox"/> Will get tested with the slightest onset of symptoms, advise their manager and leave the workplace to be tested 	Manager completes checklist with staff member and provides approval to attend work if all criteria met. The staff member may can continue working with manager's approval and does not have to wait for confirmation from COVID Staff Enquiries. Manager does not include staff who have returned to work in their furloughed workforce totals.

For instructions on staff taking a rapid antigen test, [click here](#). Staff are required to log results for every rapid antigen test they take at [this link](#).