

Workplace Safety: Prevention of Coronavirus (COVID-19), Influenza & Other Infectious Diseases in the Workplace

Employers have continually faced the widespread threat of disease, such as the present and ongoing occurrence of influenza. Recent reports indicate that a new disease, coronavirus (COVID-19), has evolved into a community spread disease, reinforcing the need for employers to take proactive steps in mitigating the spread of this or any illness. Maintaining a safe and healthy workplace is a key step for successful business continuity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides information and guidance for businesses, schools, and communities, including prevention practices such as:

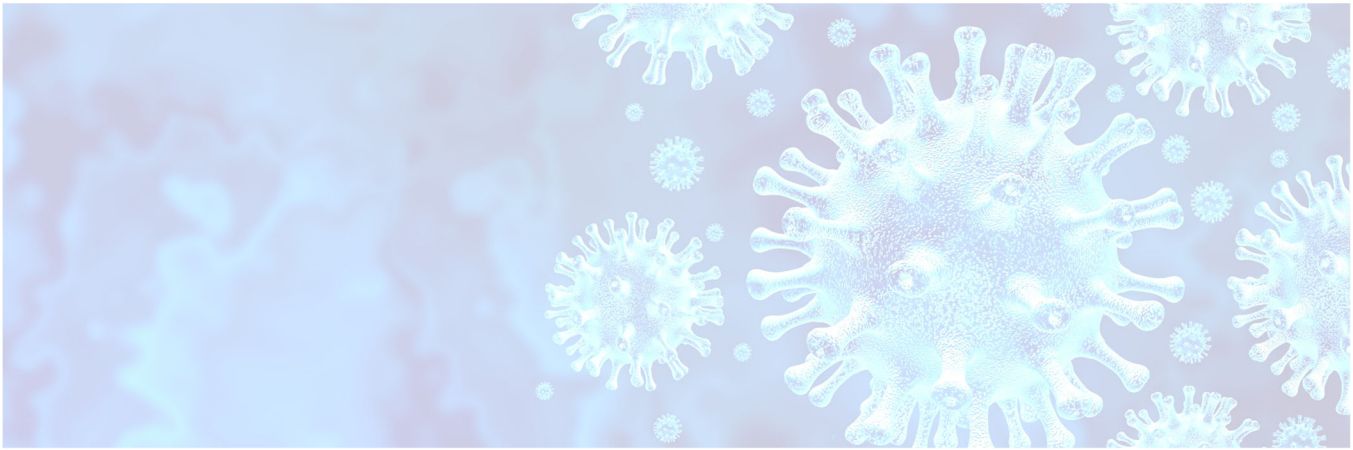
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after coming in contact with communal surfaces. Wash for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap. Hand sanitizers may be used as well.
- Keep your hands away from your face, particularly your nose, mouth and eyes.
- Disinfect surfaces that could be contaminated.
- Stay at least 3 feet away from people coughing or sneezing.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Please review the [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Update](#) for additional information.

It is important that healthcare workers strictly follow their facility's infection control procedures, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). While using this equipment can provide protection, there is the risk of exposure during the removal of contaminated PPE. We encourage you to review the [CDC's recommendations for the appropriate sequence of putting on and removing of PPE](#) to reduce the risk of exposure.

Additional information pertaining to the coronavirus (COVID-19)

- There are still many unknown facts regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19) including the time between the onset of exposure and period of infectiousness. This means the transmission of the infection may have taken place before a person tests positive and/or has demonstrated symptoms. The CDC reports that the time between exposure and symptoms occurring can be as soon as two days or as long as 14 days. This has prompted countries to implement quarantines or periods of isolation to try and mitigate the spread of the disease.



Additional information pertaining to the coronavirus (COVID-19) *continued*

- Currently, there is no vaccine or specific pharmaceutical treatment for the infection. From the limited data available, it appears older adults and people that have underlying medical conditions such as compromised immune systems may be at greater risk for more severe outcomes.

Basic hygiene practices can reduce the risk of not only contracting coronavirus (COVID-19), but also contracting other infections such as the common cold and influenza. As always, a safe and healthy workplace is key to business continuity.