



POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

POLICY: Provide a process to address healthcare worker exposure whether in the community, household contact or in the hospital.

Methodist Le Bonheur will test asymptomatic patients for COVID-19. The expectation is a low percentage of asymptomatic patients who will result a positive COVID-19 test. Transmission risks is lower since viral shedding is lower in asymptomatic patients. Despite the lower risks, notification will occur to the healthcare workers that exposure risks occurred.

PURPOSE: Identify risks of transmission of COVID-19 from community, household contact and asymptomatic patients to increase safety risks to healthcare workers and other patients.

DEFINITIONS:

Asymptomatic patient COVID-19 testing – testing patients who are inpatient and/or admitted for diagnosis other than COVID-19.

COVID-19 exposure – Close and prolonged contact (within 6 feet for >15 minutes) with a patient who is confirmed positive COVID-19 without appropriate PPE (masks gloves gown and eye protection) is considered an exposure.

- Contact with respiratory particles of COVID-19 patient while not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is an exposure. High-risk exposures general generally involves the HCW's eye, nose or mouth.
- Performing aerosol-generating procedures without appropriate PPE (N95 mask, gown, gloves and eye protection) on a confirmed COVID-19 positive patient is an exposure.
- Routine care of COVID positive patients with appropriate PPE is not an exposure.

COVID Hotline – phone line manned by team of nurses to provide guidance regarding COVID-19. The phone number is 901-516-0033

EXPOSURE PROCESS:

1. In the event an asymptomatic patient tests positive, Infection Prevention notifies the clinical director and departmental leaders that correspond to the locations of potential exposure. The may include a clinical unit, ancillary department, emergency department and procedure areas, e.g., cafeteria, Environmental Services, Operating room, GI Lab, Cath lab, Radiology services, Case Managers, Chaplain, Respiratory Therapy, Occupational/Physical/Speech Therapy, Transporters, Pharmacy, Registration, etc.
2. Department Leader, Clinical Director, and/or Ancillary Leader responsibility:
 - Identifies their unit healthcare workers and other HCW who had contact with the patient while on their unit or in the department, e.g., students, physicians who saw the patient on their unit.
 - Notify those healthcare workers who had patient contact or entered the room while on unit where the patient tested positive.

- Provide guidance to the HCW that when HCW and patient wearing a surgical mask, exposure is extremely low risks. Refer the healthcare worker to the potential COVID-19 exposure policy.
3. Healthcare worker responsibility includes:
- Risks of exposure to Healthcare workers includes community, household and/or work.
 - Healthcare workers should practice social distance even when not at work. Wear masks in public when social distancing is not possible.
 - In the event a household member tests positive, healthcare workers should take the following steps:
 - i. Immediately isolate yourself from the household contact.
 - ii. Monitor for symptoms 2-14 days after positive contact occurred. Symptoms include and are not limited to cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell. Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. Median time to develop symptoms is day 5 post exposure.
 - If **SYMPTOMATIC**, notify COVID-19 hotline at 901-516-0033 and report that you have had an exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19.
 - i. A nurse will provide next steps, which may include testing if the symptoms align with COVID-19.
 - ii. When healthcare worker presents for testing, reiterate that if exposure was with a positive patient in the hospital.
 - If **ASYMPTOMATIC**, testing is not indicated and NOT supported by Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
 - i. If testing preferred by HCW because of a work exposure, report for testing at your facility during asymptomatic testing on Tuesday or Wednesday. Testing is most reliable if done between days 4-14 of exposure. HCW does not need to call the hotline to report exposure.
 - ii. If a healthcare worker presents for testing, reiterate that you had contact with a patient who tested positive.
 - **RETURN TO WORK** for symptomatic HCP with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
 - i. Back to work is coordinated through Associate Health for healthcare workers.
 - ii. The plan includes to exclude from work until at least 24 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.
 - iii. Return to work requires approval from Associate Health.