

## Working Well Guidelines

On January 10, 2025, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) issued “[Interim Work Exclusion Guidance for Healthcare Personnel with COVID-19, Influenza, and Other Acute Respiratory Viral Infections](#)” in order to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory infections to patients and healthcare personnel (HCP). Additionally, on February 3, 2025, the [CalOSHA non-emergency COVID-19 prevention standards](#) are set to expire, which will no longer require HCPs to report COVID-19 positive results to Occupational Health.

These changes are now reflected in the UCI Health Working Well Policy. All UCI Health staff are expected to follow this policy for any respiratory infectious conditions or signs/symptoms of infection.

### 1. What is UCI Health’s Working Well Policy?

The UCI Health Working Well Policy (<https://uci.policystat.com/policy/6115229/latest>) is in place to prevent sick HCP from working while they have signs and/or symptoms of a respiratory or other communicable infection. A communicable infection is any infection that can be transmitted between humans. The policy requires HCP who develop signs or symptoms of a communicable infection to contact their supervisor and stay home from work, or go home if at work, until they meet criteria for return to work or their primary care provider (PCP) determines it is safe to return to work.

### 2. What symptoms should I monitor myself for?

If you have or develop any of the following symptoms (even if mild), you should notify your supervisor and go home if you are at work or stay home if you have yet to report to work:

- Fever ( $\geq 100$  degrees F) or chills anytime in the past 24 hours,
- Cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing
- Vomiting or diarrhea anytime in the past 24 hours,
- New rash, skin lesions, or draining wounds that cannot be covered,
- Recent respiratory illness that is mild/resolving but you still need to remove mask to blow your nose or cough up mucus more than twice an hour **OR**,
- Not feeling well enough to work

### 3. Should I still test for COVID-19 and other communicable diseases if I have symptoms?

Since COVID-19 and influenza are common, especially during the winter season, and because both can be treated to reduce serious illness, HCP who have any of the above symptoms may either choose to self-test with a home antigen test or request testing through your primary care provider (PCP).

Effective February 3, 2025, you will no longer be required to submit proof of a COVID-19 positive test to Occupational Health.

## 4. When can I return to work?

You may return to work when the following criteria are met:

- At least 24 hours have passed since the last fever ( $\geq 100$  degrees F) or chills without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**,
- Your respiratory symptoms (no cough, runny nose, sore throat) have resolved or you have mild symptoms and can tolerate wearing a mask without having to take it off to cough or blow your nose more than two (2) times per hour.
- Any active skin lesions, draining wounds, or rashes are healed or can be covered **AND** you are able to comply with strict hand hygiene practices.
- No vomiting and/or diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
- You feel well enough to work.

## 5. If I have COVID-19, do I still have to stay off work for longer than other respiratory illnesses?

No, COVID-19 now follows the same return to work guidance provided in Question 4.

## 6. What infection prevention measures should I follow when I return to work?

Once you have met the criteria to return to work, you may return to work but **MUST** follow the infection prevention measures listed below:

- Wear a mask for at least 10 days after symptom onset or positive test date if never symptomatic (regardless of your vaccination status or type of respiratory infection you developed) in the following locations:
  - Patient care areas
  - Non-patient care shared areas (e.g., hallways, restrooms, breakrooms, workrooms, etc.)
  - Carpools/Vanpools/UCI Shuttles

**NOTE:** Masks may be removed if working in a location where you are alone in an office or in a cubicle where at least a 6-foot distance can be maintained and while eating or drinking. Maintain a 6-foot distance when eating or drinking, if possible.
- Immunocompromised patient rooms or clinical areas
  - DO NOT enter if you have any active symptoms.
  - If you are symptom-free, but within 10 days of your illness onset or within 10 days of positive test if never symptomatic, you must be masked to enter the room.
- Clean your hands often, including any time before and after touching shared objects or surfaces (doorknobs, kitchen items, shared office supplies)
- Clean surfaces of shared objects and areas touched using hospital approved disinfectant.
- Maintain 6-foot social distancing in meetings, staff lounges/breakrooms, workrooms, etc.
- Do not participate in potlucks or offsite events.
- Leave work if symptoms return that would exclude you from work – for example, if you must unmask to cough or blow your nose more than two (2) times per hour.