SARS-CoV2 Incident Response
Occupational Health Program

Management of SARS-CoV2 Exposure

If you believe that you have been exposed to SARS-CoV2, please contact Occupational Health at 303-724-9145, so you can be evaluated. Once you are evaluated, we can provide you with a list of approved Designated Medical Providers (DMP). If the exposure happens after hours go to the closest, most appropriate emergency medical facility.

I. Background and Clinical Information

a. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a viral respiratory illness. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath. Symptoms can progress to pneumonia and acute lung injury, an end stage lung disease with limited treatment options that can be fatal in approximately 1-2% of cases. Persons over the age of 60, immunocompromised persons, or persons with comorbidities including hypertension and diabetes are at increased risk for severe COVID-19.

b. COVID-19 is caused by infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) coronavirus (CoV)-2, a member of the Betacoronavirus genus in the subfamily Orthocoronavirinae. SARS-CoV2 is primarily transmitted by respiratory droplets and contact of contaminated hands with eyes, nose, and mouth. The incubation is not well known, but currently available data suggest 2-14 days.

c. Diagnosis of SARS-CoV2 infection can be performed by RT-PCR analysis of nasal or oral swabs or by tests the measure the presence of SARS-CoV2 specific antibody in plasma or serum. RT-PCR tests are most reliable at day 2-4 post-illness onset.

II. Pre-exposure Health Screening

a. Employees must enroll in the University of Colorado Denver Occupational Health Program and will be provided a copy of this information at the initiation of work in laboratories in which SARS-CoV2 is present.

b. Workers with concerns about pre-existing medical conditions should call the Occupational Health Clinic to discuss their concerns with an Occupational Health provider.
c. Those who work directly with the SARS-CoV2 or COVID-19 virus require respiratory protection. Those who need to be fit to an N95 need to fill out the Respiratory Medical Form and the Initial Respiratory Form and be fit by RISH. Those who do not work directly with the virus are not required to be fit tested.

III. Preventative Measures/Vaccine information

a. No vaccine is currently available.

IV. Potential or Overt Exposures.

a. Known exposure to SARS-CoV2: Exposure is defined as needle sticks or cuts with contaminated material, splash to unprotected face, direct contact of contaminated material with broken skin, or failure of respiratory protection with aerosol generating event outside of the biosafety cabinet.

b. Develops symptoms consistent with SARS-CoV2 exposure, such as:
   i. Fever
   ii. Dry cough
   iii. Fatigue
   iv. Shortness of breath
   v. Loss of taste and/or smell

V. After an Exposure Occurs: Immediate Actions by Route of Infection

a. Needle stick or laceration: Wash the area with soap and running water. If the cut or laceration needs emergency care/stiches, seek care at the nearest ER or Urgent Care notifying them of the added COVID-19 possible exposure complication. Contact Occupational Health at 303-724-9145 as soon as possible after care is obtained. If after normal business hours, please leave a message and Occupational Health will return your phone call as soon as possible.

b. Mucous membranes (eye, mouth): If contaminated material is ingested, rinse mouth with clean water. If contaminated material is splashed or sprayed into the eyes, flush the eyes with water for 10-15 minutes.

c. Contact with intact skin and clothing: Remove contaminated clothing using gloves and place objects in plastic bags. Wash skin with soap and water.

d. Report exposure incidents immediately to the supervisor.
VI. After an Exposure Occurs: Medical Evaluation

a. If an exposure event occurs, the employee will contact Occupational Health for follow up details. You may be placed on symptom watch and required to evaluate your temperature for 14 days post exposure. If at any time you become symptomatic, please stay home and call occupational health immediately for further follow up instructions and potential testing.

b. **During weekends, holidays, and after-hours**, report exposure to your supervisor, go home and contact the Occupational Health team.

VII. After an Exposure Occurs: Post exposure prophylaxis

a. There is no effective post-exposure prophylaxis at this time.

b. Treatment for symptoms include: rest, fluids to prevent dehydration, medication to relieve fever and pain.

c. If symptoms progress to severe illness including extreme shortness of breath, the employee should immediately go to the emergency room.

VIII. After an Exposure Occurs: Reporting

a. If SARS-CoV2 exposure occurs, this will be treated as a potential failure of biosafety measures. The PI and Lab manager must be informed immediately. The PI must inform the Biosafety Officer (BSO) within 72 hours of exposure. The BSO will complete a formal re-evaluation of laboratory safety procedures to determine the possible event(s) that may have contributed to this exposure.

IX. University Risk Management / Worker’s Compensation Program

a. The University of Colorado provides Workers’ Compensation (WC) coverage, as required by state regulation.

b. Employees or other personnel covered by the WC program are required by state law to file their claims with the employer within four (4) working days, if they believe their exposure/contraction of SARS-CoV2 is work related. An adjuster will be assigned to complete an investigation and determine if this is a covered workers’ compensation claim in accordance with the Colorado Workers’ Compensation Statute.
c. Forms are available for online submission on the URM website (preferred), or can be printed out and sent as a hard copy. If an employee is incapacitated, the supervisor should initiate the claim form.

d. URM website: https://www.cu.edu/risk/services/workers-compensation