I have a foodservice employee who is sick with COVID-19 (or COVID-like symptoms). Now what?

Environmental Health Services (EHS) has received questions from food businesses about what to do if a worker tests positive for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or has symptoms but has not been diagnosed with COVID-19. This will help answer some of these questions.

How do I prepare?

COVID-19 is widespread in California, and is in Santa Barbara County. You can expect that you will have staff members develop COVID-19 or symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. These symptoms include:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- soft stools / diarrhea
- upset stomach or vomiting
- chills
- malaise / feeling unwell
- fatigue
- sneezing
- runny nose

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided general guidance for community businesses regarding how to prepare for and respond to COVID-19.

Face covers are required

All workers and/or volunteers at a food facility, regardless of the tasks they do or position they hold, must wear a face covering while in the facility.

- Cloth face covers are recommended so that single-use masks can be reserved and prioritized for healthcare workers.
- Food facilities are responsible for providing face covers for their workers free of charge. However, if a worker wants to bring their own face cover to work the employer may allow it.
• Face covers must be clean and sanitary and must cover the tip of the nose, nostrils and mouth of the wearer. They should have ties or elastic to keep them in place.

• The CDC has guidance on how to make, wear and care for cloth face covers.

Sick workers must stay home

• ALL workers (including supervisors, owners and managers) with a positive COVID-19 test result or COVID-19 symptoms must stay home.

• Sick employees should follow CDC-recommended steps. Employees may not return to work until:
  o They have been free of symptoms for at least 3 days (72 hours) without using symptom-reducing medications (like a fever reducer or cough suppressant) AND
  o At least 10 days have passed since they first started showing symptoms.

• Please do not require a note from a healthcare provider if someone is sick and staying home, or is staying home because they have been exposed to a sick person or are helping care for a sick person. They are helping keep our community safe.

What about workers who have been exposed to a sick person, but don’t have symptoms themselves?

• One of the best ways to keep your workforce healthy is for people who are sick, even just a little bit, to stay at home. This helps protect everyone.

• The CDC has developed guidelines allowing critical workers in essential industries (such as the food industry) to continue to work if absolutely necessary even if they have been exposed to COVID-19 as long as they:
  o Remain free of ALL symptoms;
  o Wear a face covering;
- Are checked daily for symptoms of COVID, including checking their temperature. The daily symptom check should continue for 14 days after their last exposure.

- (A person is considered “exposed” to COVID-19 if they have had close contact with a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or has any of the symptoms of COVID-19, or developed them within 48 hours of contact with others. “Close contact” means they have been 6 feet or closer to a sick person for 10 minutes or more.)

- **This applies to exposed workers who are critical to ongoing operations of essential services only.** Workers in essential services who are not critical to ongoing operations should follow the 14-day stay-at-home procedures recommended for non-critical workers, which are described in the next bullet point of this document. **All workers who are sick or have any symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of whether or not they are critical to ongoing operations, must stay home.**

- Even though the CDC allows critical workers in essential services to work if they have been exposed to COVID-19, **it is best if people who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms stay home for 14 days after their last known exposure to that person.**
  - While staying home, exposed persons should check themselves daily for any symptoms of COVID.
  - Staying home is especially important for people who are sharing a household with a sick person. Their chance of getting COVID-19 may be higher than for people exposed in the community or at work.

**Do I need to do any special cleaning or disinfection of my business?**

- **The CDC has developed guidance for cleaning and disinfecting your facility.**

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.

- Use an EPA-registered household disinfectant to disinfect.
  - Pay special attention to high-touch surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.
Food facilities should continue to use sanitizers approved for use in a food facility on all food contact surfaces (including multi-use utensils and equipment, as well as work surfaces such as prep tables and sink drainboards).

- Fresh air helps. Open (screened) doors and windows or run your HVAC or ventilation system to help move fresh air into your workplace.

- If a sick worker worked with food before going home, we recommend discarding that food.

**Where can I get more information?**

The following websites can provide additional information and guidance:

- The Santa Barbara County Public Health Department has a Resources page with information and links for general business and food facilities.

- The CDC has developed specific Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019

- Questions about cleaning at home? See Cleaning and Disinfection for Households

- Sharing a household with someone who has a positive COVID-19 tests or symptoms? Here is guidance for preventing the spread of coronavirus in homes and residential communities.

- Disinfectants for use against COVID-19

- California Department of Public Health has given some general guidance to food facility operators regarding COVID-19.

- Food facility operators and workers with specific questions can contact Santa Barbara County Environmental Health Services at:
  - Santa Maria main line 805-346-8460 ext. 3
  - Santa Barbara main line 805-681-4900 ext. 3
  - Email: phdehsweb@sbcphd.org