

Return to Work Recommendations

Use this recommended guide to complete the **Active Food Safety Sick Log** to establish what day an employee may return to work after being excluded from work (using the Employee Wellness Check) due to signs and symptoms and/or diagnosis of disease by a medical practitioner.

Foodborne illnesses

Allowing food employees to return to work after exclusion depends on several factors. Each of the Big 5 foodborne pathogens has unique characteristics of its illness. How long pathogens are shed in the stool and vomit affects when a food employee can return to work. Considerations for the Person in Charge include: was the employee asymptomatic; is medical documentation required; and is a regulatory authority approval required before they are allowed to return to work?

Signs and Symptoms (not diagnosed by a medical practitioner)

Vomiting- may return to work after 24 hours with no symptoms and was not diagnosed with a foodborne illness (e.g., norovirus)

Diarrhea- may return to work after 72 hours with no symptoms and was not diagnosed with a foodborne illness (e.g., norovirus). Any employee with chronic reoccurring diarrhea must have medical documentation that the employee is not infectious before returning to work

Jaundice- may return to work only after receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority approval (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

Fever with a sore throat- may return to work after 24 hours with no symptoms and was not diagnosed with an illness

Diagnosed with

Norovirus- may return to work only after no symptoms for 72 hours and upon receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority approval (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

Shigella- may return to work only after no symptoms for 7 days or upon receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

Salmonella Typhi- may return to work only after no symptoms for 14 days or upon receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

E. coli 0157:H7- may return to work only after no symptoms for 7 days or upon receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

Hepatitis A- may return to work only after receiving medical documentation and regulatory authority approval (e.g., local health department) that the employee is no longer infectious

Pandemic Coronavirus

The decision to allow an employee to return to work after exclusion based on signs and symptoms alone should be made in the context of the local regulatory authority requirements using time-since illness-onset and time-since-recovery date. Considerations for the Person in Charge include: did an employee suspected as having pandemic coronavirus based only on signs and symptoms self-isolate for 14 days; was the employee diagnosed with pandemic coronavirus via testing (some areas may not be able to test for confirmation- testing also determines if a person is likely infectious and shedding the virus); and did an employee test positive for pandemic coronavirus but did not have any signs and symptoms (i.e., infected but no disease). Always check the most current [CDC Guidance](#) for return to work recommendations.

Signs and Symptoms (not diagnosed by a medical practitioner)

Feeling Sick, Fever and/or Sore Throat, Cough, or Shortness of Breath-may return to work after 14 days:

- **AND** at least 3 days after no symptoms including fever, cough, and shortness of breath

Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [Food and Drug Association](#)
Check <https://www.emergiprotect.com/sicklog> for updates to this document

- **AND** at least 10 days have passed since the first signs and symptoms first appeared

Close contact with a Sick Person (including if the close contact tested positive)- employees who did not work under the CDC conditional work allowance (see Conditional Work Allowance button on app) may return to work after 14 days if they have not developed nor currently have any of the pandemic coronavirus signs and symptoms.

Diagnosed (tested positive with or without signs and symptoms)

Employees tested positive with no signs and symptoms- Employees who did not develop any signs and symptoms of pandemic coronavirus after being tested positive may return to work after at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive coronavirus pandemic diagnostic test AND they do not have any signs and symptoms

Employees tested positive with signs and symptoms- may only return to work after:

- Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), **AND**
- Negative results of an FDA Emergency Use Authorized molecular assay for COVID-19 from at least two consecutive nasopharyngeal swab specimens collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens) . All test results should be final before isolation is ended. Testing guidance is based upon limited information according to the CDC, and is subject to change as more information becomes available. In persons with a persistent productive cough, pandemic coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2-RNA) might be detected for longer periods in sputum specimens than in upper respiratory tract (nasopharyngeal swab) specimens.

NOTE: Ensure that the Person in Charge continues to monitor each employee's wellness before and during each shift to determine if any of these conditions change that would require a change in when they will be allowed to return to work. Any changes to these conditions should be made on the **Active Food Safety Sick Log**.