People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Most people who get COVID-19 will recover without needing medical care. Below you will find guidance on returning to work and other regular activities after you have been sick.

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.

If you are sick with COVID-19 *or if you think you might have it*, you should stay home except to get medical care and call your healthcare provider.

Testing is available in Transylvania County for people with symptoms of COVID-19. Call your healthcare provider to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19. Call the TPH nurse line at 884-4007 if you need assistance locating testing.

Most people with mild symptoms can recover at home. You should monitor and self-treat your symptoms. Separate yourself from other people in the home as much as possible. Wear a cloth face covering to prevent the spread of illness to others in your household. Clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces in your home every day according to CDC guidance at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html.

Get medical help right away if you have persistent chest pain or pressure, trouble breathing, blue lips, or confusion. Call your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency. Be sure to tell the operator that you have (or might have) COVID-19. If possible, put on a cloth face covering before medical help arrives.

> *If you were sick and had a positive COVID-19 test or weren't tested, you can leave home when:*
> - You have not had a fever for 3 days without any fever reducing medication **AND**
> - Your other symptoms have improved **AND**
> - It has been at least 10 days since you first had symptoms.
>
> *If you did not have symptoms of COVID-19 but tested positive, you can leave home when:*
> - It has been at least 10 days since your positive test **AND**
> - You continue to have no symptoms since the test.

If you test negative for COVID-19, your healthcare provider may require you to continue to stay home for 14 days after your last exposure. If the provider suspects another illness, you may be allowed to return to work 24 hours after fever and other symptoms have resolved. You can return to work without meeting the criteria above IF you have a doctor's note allowing you to return to work.

After you have recovered, remember to WEAR a cloth face covering, WAIT at least 6 feet from other people, and WASH your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Groups of people should be limited to no more than 10 indoors or 25 outdoors, with some exceptions. People at higher risk for severe illness should continue to take additional precautions and stay at home to the extent possible.

FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS: When you return to work after having symptoms of COVID-19, you must wear a facemask at all times while in the healthcare facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after symptoms first began, whichever is longer. You must also follow strict hand and respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette. You should not care for severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after your symptoms first began. Self monitor for symptoms and seek re-evaluation from your medical provider if symptoms come back or get worse.

This guidance is based on recommendations from CDC and NCDHHS, for individuals, businesses, and healthcare providers in Phase 2 of North Carolina's plan to ease restrictions, effective May 22, 2020. For more information, contact Transylvania Public Health at 828-884-3135 or info@transylvaniahealth.org

GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYERS

All businesses operating during Phase 2 must implement the guidelines required by NC Executive Order 141: https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/guidance#phase-2-easing-of-restrictions.

Check symptoms of all employees daily upon arrival at work. People who appear to have symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) or who become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.

Testing is available in Transylvania County for people with symptoms of COVID-19. Call 884-4007 for assistance locating testing. However, employers should NOT require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.

If sick person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in your facility within the past 7 days, follow the cleaning and disinfection recommendations from the CDC available at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html.

If an employee is *confirmed* to have COVID-19 infection, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Close contacts should be sent home and other employees should self-monitor for symptoms for 14 days.

> ***If your employee was sick and had a positive COVID-19 test or wasn't tested, they can return to work when:***
> * They have not had a fever for 3 days without any fever reducing medication **AND**
> * Their other symptoms have improved **AND**
> * It has been at least 10 days since they first had symptoms.
>
> ***If your employee did not have symptoms of COVID-19 but tested positive, they can return to work when:***
> * It has been at least 10 days since their positive test **AND**
> * They continue to have no symptoms since their test.

If an employee tests negative for COVID-19, their healthcare provider may require them to continue to stay home for 14 days after their last exposure. If the provider suspects another illness, they may be allowed to return to work 24 hours after fever and other symptoms have resolved. Your employee can return to work without meeting the criteria above IF they have a doctor's note allowing them to return to work.

FOR HEALTHCARE FACILITIES: Employees who return to work after having symptoms of COVID-19 must wear a facemask at all times while in the facility until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after symptoms first began, whichever is longer. They must follow strict hand and respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette as usual, and should not care for severely immunocompromised patients (e.g., transplant, hematology-oncology) until 14 days after their symptoms began. Employees should self monitor for symptoms and seek re-evaluation from their medical provider if symptoms come back or get worse.

GUIDANCE FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

When patients contact you regarding mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19, please advise them to stay home except to seek medical care and separate themselves from others in their household. You can consider testing for any patient in whom COVID-19 is suspected. Please recommend appropriate self-care treatment options.

Patients should be counseled to call you or call 911 if they have worsening signs or symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g. increasing fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chest discomfort, altered thinking, cyanosis). Healthcare workers with COVID-19 symptoms should notify their occupational health program about their symptoms.

> ***Please advise symptomatic patients with a positive COVID-19 or no test that they can return to work when:***
> * They have been without a fever for 3 days without any fever reducing medication **AND**
> * Their other symptoms have improved **AND**
> * It has been at least 10 days since they first had symptoms.
>
> ***Please advise asymptomic patients with a positive COVID-19 test that they can return to work when:***
> * It has been at least 10 days since their positive test **AND**
> * They continue to have no symptoms since their test.

If a patient tests negative for COVID-19, you may advise them to stay home for 14 days after their last exposure. If you suspect another illness, use clinical judgement to determine when they should return to work, but at least 24 hours after fever and symptoms have resolved.

FOR PATIENTS WORKING IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS: People who have symptoms of COVID-19 can return to work in healthcare settings if they meet the criteria above OR if they have no fever without fever-reducing medicines AND improvement in other symptoms AND two consecutive negative tests collected at least 24 hours apart. Patients with lab-confirmed COVID-19 without symptoms should be excluded from work for 10 days from their first positive COVID-19 test, unless they have developed symptoms since the test. All healthcare workers must follow return to work practices and restrictions. For more information, see guidance from the CDC at: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html.