



NVS Response to COVID+ Employee

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OVERVIEW

An employee who reports a positive Covid-19 test requires a sensitive and rapid response. Here is a step by step guide as to how to approach an employee who informs you that they are COVID-19 positive.

PROCEDURE

Step 1:

Express sympathy when you are informed by the employee that they have tested positive.

Acknowledge that they may be nervous (even if clinical signs are not severe) about the impact this will have on their own health, the health of family and coworkers and the impact this will have on their employment.

Let the employee share their feelings.

Reiterate that they can the clinic and team will be supportive. For example “I know that this is a scary thing to deal with. I am here for you if you need to talk, and certainly I understand that you may not be able to work for a little while or that your productivity may go down. Don’t worry about that, I understand what you’re dealing with.”

Step 2:

Review and communicate HR policies regarding sick leave entitlements etc, return to work policies for this employee.

Step 3:

Ask the employee which coworkers they have been in “close contact” with within the prior two weeks.

“Close contact” = “a person that has been within six feet of the infected employee for a prolonged period of time).

Alert those who have been in close contact with the employee as soon as possible and direct them to their own doctors.

Step 4:

You should tell everyone who was possibly exposed at work to the positive employee without revealing that employee’s identity. This can be done by phone, video or email.

“Someone in our workplace has tested positive for Covid-19, and they have identified you as a close contact person. We are here to support you. If you are at work, please prepare to leave as quickly as you can. Once you get home — or if you are already working from there — find a place to self-isolate, monitor yourself for any symptoms, and talk to your doctors. How can I support you in doing all this?”

Step 5:

Follow up any conversations with the sick employee and close contact employees by email. This is performed for two reasons

1. Given the stress involved in the situation, they may not have comprehended everything that was spoken about.
2. Documentation of the process for the business

Step 6:

Inform the business more broadly that someone has tested positive.

Respect the confidentiality of both the positive-tested employee and anyone in the close-contact group.

“The person tested positive on a certain date and is now self-isolating. The close contacts have been told and were asked to leave the workplace and self-isolate. If you were not already told you were a close contact, then you are not one. If you have questions about Covid-19 or your situation please call your doctor. The company is here to support everyone during this difficult time, and we all send our best wishes to the people affected.”

Step 7:

A senior leader should check in on the affected employee(s).

RESOURCES

Your Employee Tested Positive for Covid-19. What Do You Do?

[Alisa Cohn](#)

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https://hbr.org/2020/03/your-employee-tested-positive-for-covid-19-what-do-you-do?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=hbr&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwARoVG52FLaOtyUcAhwBczosufUW31sUuQOMeUm7Ts77cqeilApp-yyz7fE