



Face Coverings

Q: Am I required to wear a mask while working?

A: Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals wear face masks “to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others”. Therefore, all colleagues, contractors, vendors and volunteers are required to wear face coverings. Please refer to the [CDC guidelines](#) for more information on how to wear and make cloth face coverings. Surgical masks and other medical grade personal protective equipment (PPE) are critical supplies that will continue to be reserved for use in direct patient care. However, single-use masks will be available for colleagues who forget their face covering at home or are unable to provide their own face covering.

Q: Can I wear a scarf instead of a mask?

A: Acceptable forms of face coverings include scarfs, cloth masks, single-use masks and respirators that cover the mouth and nose. Please refer to the CDC guidelines for more information on how to wear and make cloth face coverings.

Q: When should I apply my face covering?

A: Face coverings should be applied prior to entering the HSHS facility and can be removed upon exiting the HSHS facility. Face coverings should also be applied at any time you are in contact with another person and are unable to remain a safe distance. Additional face covering requirements may be necessary based on a colleague’s position or work location and will be communicated as appropriate.

Q: I forgot my mask at home. What should I do?

A: Single-use masks will be provided for colleagues who forget their face covering at home or are unable to provide their own face covering.

Q: Do I need to wear my face covering while seated at my desk?

A: Colleagues whose workspace is enclosed (including cubes with walls) and/or allows for six-foot distance from other workspaces are not required to wear face coverings while seated. However, face coverings must be reapplied when a colleague stands or works from a standing desk, if another colleague enters the workspace, or if the colleague leaves his/her workspace. Additional face covering requirements may be necessary based on a colleague’s position or work location and will be communicated as appropriate.

Working Onsite

Q: I have a compromised immune system and am worried I will be exposed. What can I do?

A: HSHS is taking every precaution to help ensure the safety and health of our colleagues and limit the spread of this disease through enforcement of social distancing, face covering requirements, and cleaning standards. If you have additional concerns, please speak with your immediate supervisor or human resources. Colleagues who need assistance because of a physical or mental condition are encouraged to request a reasonable accommodation. The colleague should follow the HSHS Reasonable Accommodation policy located in MCN Policy Manager, which can be accessed using this link: [Reasonable Accommodation Request](#). Requests for reasonable accommodation should be made to your immediate supervisor. The



[Request for Reasonable Accommodation Form](#) should be completed and submitted to your local human resources department. Your immediate supervisor and your local human resources department will review the accommodation request and make a determination. Please note that this process applies to a colleague's own physical or mental condition and not to the physical or mental condition of a colleague's family member, for instance.

Q: I live with someone who has a compromised immune system. I am worried I will be exposed and bring COVID-19 home. What can I do?

A: HSHS is taking every precaution to help ensure the safety and health of our colleagues and limit the spread of this disease through enforcement of social distancing, face covering requirements, and cleaning standards. If you have additional concerns, please speak with your immediate supervisor.

Q: Am I required to have my temperature taken when reporting to work?

A: Colleagues are asked to self-screen for possible COVID-19 symptoms prior to arriving at work. Colleagues who record a temperature of 100.4°F or higher or who experience a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or other possible COVID-19 symptoms should contact their leader prior to reporting for work.

Q: What happens if I get sick? Will I get paid for time off? What if someone in my family gets sick and I have to care for him or her?

A: Colleagues are required to self-screen for possible COVID-19 symptoms. A colleague who records a temperature of 100.4°F or higher or who experiences a cough, sore throat, shortness of breath or other possible COVID-19 symptom should contact his/her leader prior to reporting for work and follow the process outlined by HSHS and its clinical contacts. Colleagues who are sick or are experiencing possible COVID-19 symptoms must stay home and utilize Paid Time Off (PTO). Colleagues who miss more than 7 consecutive calendar days of work due to their own illness and otherwise meet eligibility for the HSHS Short Term Disability program will be eligible to receive short term disability benefits. Colleagues who need to miss work to care for a family member should utilize PTO and may also be eligible for Family Medical Leave (FML) and/or Emergency Leave.

In order to qualify for the Emergency Leave benefit, one or more of the following situations must be true: the colleague is confirmed to have COVID-19, the colleague has a family member with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis living in their home, or the colleague has been notified by a regulatory agency of direct exposure and is required to quarantine. Colleagues who meet one or more of the Emergency Leave criteria should notify his/her leader as soon as possible and provide documentation of positive COVID test and/or notification of required quarantine by a regulatory agency. The leader will be responsible for submitting the [Emergency Leave Request Form](#) to Leave@hshs.org to initiate the Emergency Leave processes for the colleague.

Q: What is being done to keep me safe?

A: HSHS is taking every precaution to help ensure the safety and health of our colleagues and limit the spread of this disease through enforcement of social distancing, face covering requirements, enhanced cleaning efforts, along with providing hand sanitizer and wipes. In addition, disinfectant sprays have been made available for colleagues who wish to further clean and sanitize their workspace. If you have any concerns regarding the safety of your specific work location, please notify your direct supervisor or human resources department.

Q: What will happen at the worksite if a colleague tests positive for COVID-19?



A: Colleagues will be asked to communicate test results to the designated clinical team. If a colleague tests positive for COVID-19, the designated clinical team will provide further direction which may include, but not be limited to, contact tracing, symptom tracking, increased cleaning/disinfecting and temporary worksite closures.

Q: Can we have in-person meetings?

A: Business travel and in-person meetings should be limited. It is strongly recommended that meetings continue to occur virtually until further notice when possible. Meetings that must occur in-person should adhere to the following guidelines:

- *Meeting room occupancy should be limited to less than normal occupancy. Recommended occupancy may vary by community and local and/or state guidelines and will be communicated accordingly by ministry or division leadership.*
- *Meeting attendees must continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines.*
- *Face coverings must be worn at all times if a six-foot distance cannot be maintained.*
- *Additional guidance on safety precautions within meeting spaces may be provided by local quality/infection prevention teams and can vary depending on the level of COVID-19 activity.*

Q: Am I able to work remotely during the pandemic?

A: HSHS will activate pandemic surge remote work when the number of positive tests in a community and/or state reaches 8% or higher and upon approval by the HSHS Chief Physician Executive and the Division President & CEO. Activation of pandemic surge remote work is considered market-based in that it will be determined based on pandemic-related activity of the community and/or state in which the ministry and/or division resides. Eligible colleagues will be notified upon the activation of pandemic surge remote work. For additional information, please review the [Pandemic Surge Remote Work](#) policy.

Q: Who is required to follow the requirements outlined in this FAQ document?

A: These guidelines are to be followed by all HSHS colleagues, contractors, vendors and volunteers until further notice.

Q: Where can I find additional information relative to COVID-19?

A: Information for HSHS colleagues on COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Additional COVID-19 Information

Q: If I am in an essential role and have been exposed to COVID-19 in the community but am asymptomatic, can I still report to work?

A: In the context of sustained community transmission of COVID-19, all health care workers are at some risk for exposure at work and within the community. Following CDC guidance, HSHS may require essential, asymptomatic colleagues exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 patient or someone in the community to work while following all precautionary measures, including self-monitoring, utilization of a face covering, and hand hygiene.

Q: If I have potentially been exposed to COVID-19 during the course of my work, can I be required to undergo a COVID-19 test?

A: If it is identified in a surveillance process that a colleague had direct exposure to COVID-19, they will be required to test. If they refuse to test, they will be required to be off work for up to 14 days unpaid with the expectation that they are



quarantining at the time and monitoring any possible symptoms. If the colleague decides to test during that time, if they test negative, they would then be required to coordinate through their clinical contact/occupational health, who will determine whether it is appropriate for them to return to work. If the colleague remains off work for the full 14-day quarantine period, they would be required to be cleared by the appropriate clinical contact/occupational health prior to being able to return to work.

Q: Who is at a higher risk for getting COVID-19?

*A: COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.*

Based on current information, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- *People 65 years and older*
- *People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility*

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- *People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma*
- *People who have serious heart conditions*
- *People who are immunocompromised*
 - *Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications*
- *People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)*
- *People with diabetes*
- *People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis*
- *People with liver disease*

Q: How is COVID-19 spread?

A: COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close, person-to-person contact. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- *Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet)*
- *Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks*
- *These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs*
- *COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms*

Q: What is the best way to prevent COVID-19-related illness and avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus?

A: Here are some things you can do to keep you, your family, your coworkers and your patients safe during this time:

- *Maintain social distance (about 6 feet). This is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.*
- *Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.*
- *Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.*
- *Avoid large gatherings.*



- *Avoid any gathering, both indoor and outdoor, where distancing and masking is not observed by all.*
- *Wear a mask every time you are around non-household members.*
- *Consider wearing a mask even around household members if any of you are in higher risk settings or situations where you could be exposed to COVID-19.*
- *Avoid sharing drinks and touching the same food.*
- *Promote safe behaviors among your family and friends and coworkers.*

Q: What is the risk to colleagues?

A: Many colleagues, even those who do not encounter infectious people in the course of their job duties, have similar exposure risks as the general American public during a pandemic. Other workers, including healthcare professionals, are at increased risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes Coronavirus Disease 2019 [COVID-19]) while on the job.

The risks from SARS-CoV-2 for workers depends on how extensively the virus spreads between people; the severity of resulting illness; pre-existing medical conditions workers may have; and the medical or other measures available to control the impact of the virus and the relative success of these measures. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides detailed information about this topic.

According to the CDC, certain people, including older adults and those with underlying conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19.

Q: What are some resources where I can access more information?

A: More information can be found via these links:

[*CDC guidelines for older adults*](#)

[*CDC guidelines on social distancing*](#)

[*CDC guidelines on hand washing*](#)

[*CDC guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting*](#)

[*Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity - Restore Illinois*](#)

[*Wisconsin Department of Health Services - COVID-19 resources*](#)