

What Employers Need to Know Before Sending an Employee to be Tested for the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

COVID-19, originally referred to as 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), was recently discovered in Wuhan, China. Cases of COVID-19 are appearing across the globe, and MercyOne teams are monitoring and preparing for the virus to help keep our communities healthy. [Learn More](#)

Here are some frequently asked questions that may guide you:

1) What if my employee has respiratory symptoms (cough, fever, runny nose or other cold or flu-like symptoms)?

- If your employee shows symptoms described above, the employee may want to contact their PCP (Primary Care Provider) or local health care system. Please call ahead to confirm specific directions. The provider's staff may conduct a screening over the phone. If the employee does not have a doctor, [click here](#) to find a MercyOne location near you.
- If your employee does not exhibit symptoms, you should refer to your company policy and advise the employee appropriately before they return to work.

2) What should I do if my employee traveled back from the countries identified as Level 3 Alert 3 by the CDC?

- If your employee traveled to any of the above countries, then the employee should self-quarantine for 14 days following their return and practice social distancing. Encourage them to take their temperature two times a day and monitor for a fever (100.4°F/38°C or higher). If they develop a cough and have trouble breathing, they should contact their PCP or local health care system immediately.

3) What if my employee was in close contact with a person known to have a confirmed positive COVID-19 test?

- If you are concerned an employee was exposed to COVID-19, please call ahead to your PCP or health care system. They will assess your symptoms and ask about your employee's recent travel history. If the employee is self-quarantined for 14 days, and the symptoms arise, they should contact their PCP or local health care system.

If an employee answers yes to screening questions, MercyOne colleagues will isolate the patient and alert the Iowa Department of Public Health to coordinate testing. (Sharon said that we are no longer alerting the Iowa Department of Public Health?)

If the employee was not in contact or in an area of concern, you should refer to your company policy and advise the employee appropriately before they return to work.

4) What clinical procedure's is MercyOne following?

- The safety of our patients, communities and colleagues is our primary focus during the COVID-19 outbreak. We are working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Iowa Department of Public Health to prepare, prevent and, if needed, care for anyone impacted by this disease.

MercyOne communicates regularly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to help protect our communities from infectious diseases. All MercyOne locations follow CDC protocols for evaluating and reporting potential cases of COVID-19 and all other infectious diseases.

Suspected cases will go through channels established by the CDC for diagnosis confirmation. Patients who present with symptoms, as outlined by CDC, and have recently traveled or been in close proximity with someone who has traveled to affected areas, are immediately isolated.