How COVID-19 Spreads and How Employees Can Reduce Risk at Work

This includes information from presentation by UCSC epidemiologist A. Marm Kilpatrick. To watch presentation in its entirety, please go to https://drive.google.com/file/d/1daDNxcQH4RaBPlWElqzOPWKo5uuHuPU/view

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOURCE: CDC

Business as Usual Looks a Little Different Now

As businesses reopen, it's important to understand how to minimize risk and prevent a resurgence of infection in both the workplace and the general public. The following information is to better understand the virus, how it spreads and what precautionary steps can be taken in the workplace to help ensure a safe work environment.

Let's Clarify What COVID-19 Even Is

There has been a great amount of confusion as to how to refer to this virus. Why is it referred to sometimes as COVID-19 and sometimes as the coronavirus?

- COVID-19 is the disease caused by the SARS-Cov-2 virus. 'CO' is short for Corona, 'VI' for virus, and 'D' for disease. It was first identified in 2019.
- A coronavirus is a common, and usually not dangerous virus that infects your nose, sinus and upper throat.
- The 'novel' in novel coronavirus refers to it being a newly encountered virus.

Okay, So How Does it Spread and What are the Symptoms?

THE COVID VIRUS SPREADS PRIMARILY FROM PERSON TO PERSON BY WAY OF RESPIRATORY DROPLETS PASSED WHEN A PERSON COUGHS, SNEEZES OR EVEN TALKS.

SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- COUGH
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH OR DIFFICULTY BREATHING
- FEVER
- CHILLS
- ACHES AND PAINS
- SORE THROAT
- HEADACHE
- NEW LOSS OF TASTE AND SMELL
- VOMITING OR DIARRHEA

(SOURCE: CDC)

What do we know?

- Social distancing, wearing masks and frequent handwashing are key preventative measures for slowing the spread.
- A person who was infected and has since recovered may test positive for viral fragments but cannot spread the disease.
- After recovery, antibodies provide protection. What isn't known is how long that protection lasts.
- While the virus can live on surfaces, the risk of transmission from a surface to a person is very low. However it is still very important to disinfect surfaces.
- Masks offer some protection to the wearer, which is about a 10% reduction in infections, however they are most effective in protecting those around the wearer, which is an 80% reduction in infections. Either way, masks must be properly worn and fitted.

What Don’t We Know?

- How large of a dose of the virus is needed to be infectious.
- Why some people who test positive are asymptomatic.
- How long the virus can live on surfaces.
- How far the virus can travel in the air.
- When this pandemic will end.

What are actions that can decrease risk of transmission?

- Open windows and doors to allow good air flow.
- Properly wear face coverings.
- Limit duration of contact with an infected person. (Attempt to limit contact time to 6-10 minutes)
- Wash hands regularly.
- Follow physical distancing protocol and stay six feet apart when possible.
- It is suggested businesses allow one customer per 133 sq ft of space in their businesses at a time. Once maximum suggested occupancy is reached, one-person-in and one-person-out should be enforced when possible.



Be Smart! Do Your Part!

To ensure a safe work environment, we need to work together.

- Self-monitor for symptoms and exposure.
- Immediate isolation and testing for those experiencing symptoms. DO NOT COME TO WORK IF EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS.
- Let supervisor or manager know if there has been exposure.
- Practice physical distancing in the workplace and when you are not at work. Avoid gathering in large groups or high-risk travel.
- Frequently disinfect workstations, phones and high-touch surfaces.
- Wear face covering while at work and when not at home. You do not need to wear a face covering while eating or are outdoors away from others.
- Wash hands frequently for 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer when hand washing is not possible.

Follow these precautions and problem solved, right?

Wrong…

These precautions and guidelines represent the best response to the best data we have available and while they do minimize risk, they don't eliminate all risk. There's still that ever-looming possibility that we will have to follow stricter mitigative measures or even be required to close again.

If this happens, we will need to continue to follow the guidelines issued by the CDC, OSHA, County Health Department and State orders.

Helpful Resources

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR – CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES
HTTPS://WWW.DOL.GOV/CORONAVIRUS

CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL COVID INFO
HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/2019-NCOV/

STATEWIDE INDUSTRY TO REDUCE RISK:
HTTPS://COVID19.CA.GOV/INDUSTRY-GUIDANCE

MULTI-LINGUAL PRINT RESOURCES FROM CDC
HTTPS://WWW.CDC.GOV/CORONAVIRUS/2019-COV/COMMUNICATION/PRINT-RESOURCES.HTML

OSHA GUIDANCE ON PREPARING WORKPLACE FOR COVID-19
HTTPS://WWW.OSHA.GOV/PUBLICATIONS/OSHA3990.PDF

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
HTTP://WWW.SANTACRUZHEALTH.ORG PH: 454-2022 OR EMAIL ENV.HLTH@SANTACRUZCOUNTY.US

CITY OF WATSONVILLE
HTTPS://WWW.CITYOFWATSONVILLE.ORG

PAJARO VALLEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE
HTTPS://WWW.PAJAROVALLEYCHAMBER.COM