

HEALTH ADVISORY: Return-to-Work Guidance – Health Care Personnel

December 23, 2025

We hope this message finds you well. Benton County Health Department is sharing updated [return-to-work guidance](#) from the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for Health Care Personnel(HCP) with acute respiratory illness. Suspect or confirmed [acute respiratory illness](#) includes two or more of the following symptoms: fever, cough, runny nose or nasal congestion, or sore throat.

OHA Return-to Work Guidance for HCP

- Do not return to work until:
 - **At least 3 days** have passed since symptom onset (day 0 = first day of symptoms), and
 - at least 24 hours fever-free without fever-reducing medication, and
 - Symptoms are improving and the individual feels well enough to work.
- Wear a well-fitting facemask for source control in all patient care and common areas (e.g., breakrooms) for 10 days after symptom onset.

Asymptomatic HCP with a positive test

- Wear a well-fitting facemask for source control for 10 days after the first positive test.
- Employers may consider excluding asymptomatic HCP from work for 3 days after the first positive test.

Additional Notes

- Testing is not required to return to work.
- HCP should stay up to date on influenza and other recommended immunizations and follow facility policies for source control masking.

For questions, please contact OHA Healthcare-Associated Infection Program Manager Lex Zhang (alexia.y.zhang@oha.oregon.gov). OHA's HAN Alert is referenced below.

Respectfully,



Carolina Amador, MD, MPH
Public Health Officer



Sara Hartstein, MPH
Public Health Administrator



Oregon Health Authority has updated [return-to-work guidance for health care personnel \(HCP\) with acute respiratory illness](#). This guidance replaces pathogen-specific guidance and applies to HCP with suspect or confirmed acute respiratory illness. Pathogens for this guidance includes influenza, respiratory syncytial virus, COVID-19, and other acute respiratory infections except those for which distinct public health guidance exists (e.g., novel influenza A virus or Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). To maximize patient and HCP safety, return-to-work guidance should focus on symptom-based exclusion and comprehensive source control.

HCP with suspect or confirmed [acute respiratory illness](#) (two or more signs or symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose or nasal congestion, or sore throat) **should:**

- Not return to work until at least 3 days have passed since symptom onset where first day of symptoms is day 0 AND at least 24 hours have passed with no fever (without use of fever-reducing medicines), symptoms are improving, and they feel well enough to return to work.
- Wear a well-fitting facemask for source control in all patient care and common areas of the facility (e.g., HCP breakrooms) for at least 10 days after symptom onset.
- Asymptomatic HCP who test positive should wear a well-fitting facemask for source control for 10 days after their first positive test. Employers may consider exclusion of asymptomatic HCP for 3 days after their first positive test.

Testing is not required to return to work. HCP should be encouraged to stay up to date on influenza and other recommended immunizations and follow health care facility policies for source control masking.

For questions, please contact Healthcare-Associated Infections Program Manager Lex Zhang (alexia.y.zhang@oha.oregon.gov).