Your Guide to COVID-19 Screening & Testing

As employers evaluate how to best create a safe working environment to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission, it is important to understand the roles both testing and symptom checking can play.

UNDERSTANDING COVID-19 TESTS

When an individual exhibits symptoms or has confirmed or suspected exposure to COVID-19, these tests can help to detect the presence of the disease.

TEST TYPE	DIAGNOSTIC USE	SUBSTANCE DETECTED	DURATION OF ACCURACY	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Antigen (swab)	Active infection	Viral Proteins	24 hours	Results typically delivered in 15 minutes. Not as accurate as PCR testing.
Molecular Diagnostic (swab)	Active infection	Viral RNA	24 hours	Results typically delivered in 1-5 days
Serological (blood test)	Previous infection	Antibody Proteins	Longer validity if presence of antibodies is confirmed	Not clear if antibodies confer immunity; can be inaccurate when COVID prevalence in the community is low.

Antigen and PCR tests can diagnose the active COVID-19 infection at a moment in time. Even with a negative virus test, people may still have the virus (i.e. false negative) or become symptomatic at a later date. Serology tests detect the presence of antibodies produced after exposure to the virus. However, it remains uncertain whether individuals with antibodies are protected against reinfection with Covid-19, therefore the CDC does not recommend serology tests to determine when it is safe for a person to return to work. **The continued strategy and reinforcement of screening, hygiene, social distancing and masks are critical.**

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RETURN-TO-WORKSITE SCREENING: DAILY RISK EVALUATION

Symptom checking can help employers determine the risk of an individual entering a worksite location.

Symptom checking includes tools such as:

TOOL	ADMINISTRATION	DURATION OF ACCURACY	OTHER CONSIDERATIONS
Symptom and Exposure Questionnaire including temperature check	App or Web -based prior to arriving at worksite or worksite entry	Daily (work day) or until an employee exhibits symptoms	Employer has daily snapshot of employee health. Can be anonymous or identified with employee consent.
Entry Temperature check	Temperature Screening at entry points or as needed based on symptoms		

Daily screenings can help an employer evaluate the presence of symptoms across their workforce, for the purposes of determining who should enter the worksite on a particular day. If symptoms are identified, an individual should follow protocols established by the employer and/or consult with a healthcare provider. Note that if individuals have been exposed to COVID-19, they may be able to spread the virus even though they do not experience symptoms early in the infection. The strategies outlined above should be combined with social distancing, mask utilization, and vigilant hand washing/sanitizing in order to be effective at limiting COVID transmission in the workplace.

A NOTE ABOUT COVERAGE

Most standard benefit plans do not cover tests being conducted strictly for employment reasons (e.g., employment drug screenings, return-to-worksite), therefore COVID-19 tests performed for return-to-worksite purposes will generally not be covered. The intention of the Cares Act legislation is to provide relief of cost share and coverage for people seeking medical care due to concerns/symptoms of COVID-19. It requires that commercial health benefit plans (including employer-sponsored plans) waive customer cost share for certain COVID-19 testing during the public emergency period (currently ending 7/24/2020). The Cares Act does not pay for testing costs or cost share, nor does it cover testing for return-to-worksite purposes. Additionally, several tests promoted by vendors or online may not have FDA approval and would not be covered.

For a list of FDA Emergency Use Authorize (EUA) tests, please visit: https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/emergency-situations-medical-devices/emergency-use-authorizations

KEEPING YOUR WORKFORCE SAFE

Maintaining a safe work environment will require ongoing safety practices, as recommended by the CDC, OSHA, and State and Local guidelines. For additional return-to-worksite resources, please visit:
https://www.express-scripts.com/corporate/coronavirus-resource-center

For State and local prevalence and testing rates for COVID-19:
https://www.nytimes/com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-us-cases

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