ICSI COVID PLAYBOOK

2/01/22

ICSI will employ four guiding principles in our efforts to limit the impacts of COVID-19:

- Our top priority is keeping our employees and their families safe;
- We will contribute to keeping the communities in which we operate safe;
- We will do our best to maintain operational excellence in service to our mission, our collaborators, and our funders; and,
- Decisions will be made to ensure the long-term strength, resilience, and sustainability of ICSI.

Our core prevention strategy is to limit exposure to the virus by using PPE, maintaining distance, and limiting contact time. . This is coupled with COVID immunization to reduce risk of the adverse consequences of any COVID infection which may occur.

What is COVID?

We use the terms of both "COVID" and "COVID-19" to describe both the infection and disease caused by a particular coronavirus which is causing the current pandemic. The large family of coronaviruses is responsible for many of the colds we get, and in 2003 one particularly lethal member of this virus family spawned the global SARS outbreak.

This related coronavirus ("SARS-CoV-2") is quite different. It's highly infectious, sometimes spreads silently (in that some infected get no symptoms of disease), and it causes much more than just respiratory disease. This is no flu. To date, over 63 million Americans have been diagnosed with COVID infection, though it is likely that 2-3 times that number have actually been infected. More than 840,000 Americans have died of COVID, while many others have suffered long-term heart damage, neurologic damage, chronic fatigue, and much more.

Because this is a virus that changes over time, we need to *adapt* to effectively combat its threat. One example of this was our adoption of mask use as we learned just how many of those people infected didn't have symptoms (were "asymptomatic") – and could spread infection. That decision has been refined as more infectious strains of the virus have arisen: high grade masks are replacing the use of cloth masks and even surgical masks. Our COVID vaccines also need to be improved and updated to adapt to the genetic changes in the virus so that our immunization efforts remain effective!

It is critical to understand that guidelines and procedures change in response to growing knowledge about this new coronavirus. **You can access some of the latest standards and advice from the CDC at:** https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/index.html

There is no doubt that the way we work, study, travel, socialize, and do so many activities must change in some ways. As the British have said, "Keep calm, and carry on". We can get through this…as we have before.

Protect yourself from infection

COVID is caused by a respiratory virus. Thus coughing, sneezing, and even talking can spread the virus. Three central principles are extremely helpful in vastly decreasing reduce your COVID risk:

1. **Keep a barrier between you and the virus.** A proper mask is the key tool to protect yourself. All masks offer some benefit, but a well-fitting professional-grade mask such as the KN95 type we supply may reduce your exposure by as much as 95%. You may also use gloves or a face shield if you must handle items which may be contaminated, or are performing cleaning or sanitizing.

Use your mask. <u>While at the ICSI office, you are expected to use a KN95 mask or other pre-approved face covering at all times you are not alone in a room with the door closed.</u> KN95 masks can be worn multiple days, but should not be cleaned or washed. Simply discard your mask after prolonged use, or if you note it shows any signs of soiling or wear. Keep in mind that the outside of the mask should be considered contaminated and you should avoid excessive handling of it, or contaminating the clean inside layer which sets against your face when the mask is worn

And as always, good hygiene is helpful. Frequent hand washing with warm water and soap – or using the provided hand sanitizing stations when a sink isn't nearby - is essential to good hygiene. This may not only reduce your risk of contracting COVID, but combats other viruses which cause colds and flu. Be sure to sanitize the surfaces of items you share with others - such as a computer or tool.

2. **Maintain distance from others**. Keeping at least six feet apart from others reduces the likelihood of transmission of the virus. Your risk is also lower when ventilation is better, such as when you are outdoors. We utilize high quality "HEPA" air filtration equipment in addition to our central air system to optimize the quality of the air in our offices.

3. **Limit exposure time and contacts**. Five minutes in proximity to someone is less risky than an hour. Similarly, exposure to a member of your household who practices prudent behaviors is less risky than time spent with those who may be taking higher risks. It comes as no surprise that whenever you are close to multiple individuals, and those who have higher risk, your own risk increases.

<u>Review the latest prevention guidelines from CDC:</u>

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html

Improve your immunity with a COVID vaccine

A key way to reduce the risk and impact of COVID is to increase our immunity to the virus. Some have argued that one way to do that would be to gain immunity by recovering from infection with the virus, but that entails many millions suffering illness, disability and loss of life. In addition, experience is teaching us that prior COVID infection may not protect adequately from future infection, particularly from new virus variants such as Omicron.

COVID Vaccine Facts

Multiple vaccines have been introduced and more are likely to be authorized by the FDA. Clinical trials have shown the first two – the Moderna and Pfizer products - actually reduce infection by some COVID variants by about 90 percent. More important, those immunized are much less likely to be hospitalized or suffer death from COVID.

This quick success was not a result of compromising safety. Rapid success was a result of many scientific breakthroughs in recent years, but it was also a product of funding by the federal government, which allowed firms with promising vaccine candidates to begin building the capacity to produce their products so that those which succeeded could be *quickly supplied* to minimize disease and loss of life. In funding so many candidate vaccines, it was understood that some wouldn't be both safe and effective, and that those would never be used.

Immunization is a preventive service available to everyone at no cost. The particular vaccine one is immunized with should be a choice made with a health professional. Vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. are all modern products which cannot give you an infection, and have been extensively tested for safety.

What if I cannot be immunized? A small percentage of individuals may not be able to be immunized for medical reasons. This underscores why it is important for others to be vaccinated in order to reduce the risk that the unimmunized will be exposed to the virus. When facing such a direct threat as this pandemic, employers may require that staff are immunized. Religious or other beliefs may conflict with that requirement, but employers need not provide *unreasonable* accommodation for that, given that mitigation measures may be necessary to perform one's work safely in a pandemic environment, in order to *avoid posing a risk to others*.

What should one expect when being immunized? The vaccine you receive will involve an injection, and one or more boosters weeks later. One doesn't gain immunity immediately – it takes at least two weeks before you have substantial protection. You'll be informed about possible side effects and given other guidance, but one thing to keep in mind is that *many who are vaccinated will have some mild side effects* such as body aches, mild fever or chills, or fatigue – these may make some think they have contracted a COVID infection, but if it follows the injection and lasts only a day or so, it is just a sign that one's body has begun to develop an immune response to the coronavirus.

Can one discard masking and other measures once you are immunized? The simple answer for now is unfortunately, no. While new COVID vaccines appear to reduce infections, they have been primarily

tested for their ability to prevent disease. One might still be infected by the virus, and your body may eradicate so quickly that you do not develop symptoms…yet one could transmit infection to another person in that brief period. It's helpful to consider that we need to employ multiple measures to suppress this pandemic. This is much like how we address other safety concerns. We use seatbelts and drive within speed limits despite the fact that our car may have such safety devices as an airbag and antilock brakes – because each of these contributes to making driving safer. Some COVID prevention measures will change over time, but our recovery from this pandemic will take more than a single immunization – and vaccines will help us return to lead more normal lives.

The job of immunizing to combat COVID still poses challenges. We have already discovered mutant strains of the virus which can be less susceptible to some vaccine formulations – and both the Delta and Omicron variants examples of that. This isn't different than the challenges we have faced in the past – we annually update our influenza vaccine to target new strains of that virus, and the same is already being addressed for this coronavirus. We also know that some countries will lag behind in immunizing, and some outbreaks can be expected. Yet we can address this coronavirus successfully, just as we have so many other infectious diseases.

Ask your health care professional. A physician or other practitioner can guide you with questions regarding a COVID vaccine. They can also provide you help as you strive to protect yourself, your family, and your friends and coworkers from the threat of COVID.

Monitor your health

You protect yourself and others by *monitoring your health*, as well as any risk you may have as a result of *exposure to someone* who has received a positive COVID test. It is critical to keep in mind that risks and exposure can exist anywhere: at home, in the community, and at work. While our CPRP describes measures to protect you at work, be sure to practice healthy behaviors in all those settings.

Symptoms

If you are experiencing any of the following commonly recognized COVID symptoms, you should contact a medical practitioner to arrange for testing. People with these symptoms *may* have COVID:

- Fever or chills*
- New loss of taste or smell*
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing*
- Cough
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Note that the first three symptoms marked with an asterisk (*) particularly help distinguish COVID from common coughs and colds. People with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms and severity – ranging from mild symptoms to critical illness requiring prompt hospitalization. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus.**

Because some of the symptoms of COVID are similar to those you may experience from other conditions, such as a cold or flu, testing is needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Consult a medical practitioner regarding testing. The CDC has also provided a Coronavirus Self Checker to help guide individuals regarding COVID testing.

Resuming onsite operations

We are taking a very cautious approach to reopening. Your personal health and safety are our number one priority. Our primary criteria for conducting work on-site is the local rate of new COVID cases, as that reflects the amount of infection in our area. When the number of new infections is low, so is one's risk of contracting COVID. Since the number of infections can quickly increase, we have established criteria for reopening, and conditions under which we will suspend on-site work:

- **Reopening for on-site work:** To reopen, the 7-day average of new COVID cases must be less than 50/100,000 persons in Alameda County[1].

- **Suspending operations:** We recognize that small clusters of COVID cases can create fluctuations in COVID case rate, and small changes could cause erratic short cycles of reopening and closing. To avoid that, we will suspend on-site operations for non-essential employees if the current 7-day average of new COVID cases in Alameda County exceeds 100/100,000 persons, and will remain closed until the reopening criteria is met.

Other conditions may be considered as well, including the occurrence of COVID cases in our workplace. In addition, we will comply with the requirements of local, state, and federal authorities.

To limit coronavirus exposure while in the office, we will:

- Require all employees returning to on-site work to first be immunized against COVID.
- Encourage employees to continue to work from home.
- Limit the occupancy of each office to only one person at a time. Generally, only one person will use an office on a given day. When an exception needs to be made, there must be one hour of vacancy before the office is occupied by another person for work, and surfaces commonly contacted such as a mouse or keyboard must be cleaned with disinfectant.
- Limit bathroom occupancy to one person at a time.
- Require KN95 masks to be worn in open/common areas of the office. ICSI will provide the KN95 masks at no charge.
- Prohibit in-person social gatherings and the sharing of food.

Before coming to work each day

1. Assess your health and how you are feeling every day you plan to come to work. If you're not sure, please play it safe and stay home that day. Keep a thermometer handy to check your temperature as part of your routine symptom screening process at home. The use of home antigen tests can also be helpful in determining whether you may pose an immediate danger to others, but note that an antigen test today only would confirm you are not likely to transmit COVID infection to others. A day or two later, one could be infectious if you were recently exposed to the virus.
2. **Submit the Daily Symptom Screener** here.
   THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED EVERY DAY PRIOR TO ENTERING THE WORKPLACE.

COVID Exposure or Infection

Inform HR regarding your status if you have either had exposure (a close contact with a person with COVID), or if you test positive. This is critically important, as this could have ramifications for your family, coworkers and others.

Whether exposed or ill, a COVID test is needed. You may do this through your healthcare provider, at a community test site, or you may use a home antigen test. Testing accomplishes two goals by helping to determine if you have been infected, as well as when you have recovered and are no longer infectious. That typically means that at least two tests will be performed. Consult a health professional and carefully follow instructions to ensure accurate results.

Those exposed to COVID must *quarantine* until it is confirmed they have not been infected, while those who have been infected with the virus must *isolate* until recovered. The periods for quarantine have been adjusted as the virus has changed, and guidelines for those who have current COVID vaccination are different from those not fully immunized. CDC has a page describing these guidelines.

One advantage of immunization now is that for immunized individuals, both quarantine and illness are shorter, and are able to return to normal activities more quickly.

What sort of exposures count as close contact?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID for a total of 15 minutes or more.
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID.
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils.
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

Quarantine Procedure: Stay home and monitor your health

Follow the recommendations of your physician and local public health authorities if you need to quarantine. These will specify the period of quarantine.

When you are in quarantine, you must:

- Stay home.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands, and take other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Avoid contact with others, especially people those at higher risk for getting very sick.
- Watch for signs of infection, including fever (temperature over 100.4˚F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID. If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate within your home and contact your healthcare provider or local public health authority.

For additional and updated information, you may obtain additional guidance at:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

Returning to work after a COVID infection

Contact ICSI HR (jaci@icsi.berkeley.edu) when you are ready to return to work after a COVID infection.

We will verify that the CDC recommended requirements for returning to work have been satisfied. Requirements vary, depending on your individual circumstances.

A negative COVID-19 test is required for an employee to return to work. This may be either a PCR test or an antigen test.

If an order to isolate or quarantine an employee is issued by a local or state health official, the employee will not return to work until the period of isolation or quarantine is completed or the order is lifted.