ICSI COVID PLAYBOOK

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.

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 32 million Americans have been diagnosed with COVID infection, though it is likely that about three times that number have actually been infected. More than 570,000 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. Initially, this meant adopting the use of masks as we learned just how many of those people infected do not experience symptoms – were “asymptomatic” – and can spread infection. Our COVID vaccines will need to be regularly 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 overcome infectious diseases in the past.
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 reducing your risk of COVID:

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 you may reduce your exposure by as much as 95%. You may also need to use gloves or a face shield if you must handle items which may be contaminated, or are performing cleaning or sanitizing.

   **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.** 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 it is worn.

   *And as always, practice good hygiene.* 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 not only reduces 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 healthy 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.

**Review the latest prevention guidelines from CDC:**

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 recover from infection with the virus, but that entails many millions suffering illness, disability and loss of life.

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 COVID by over 90 percent. That is phenomenal success for a vaccine!

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. Employers must prioritize a safe work environment and make efforts to reasonably accommodate those with religious or other beliefs in conflict with immunizations.

What should one expect when being immunized? The vaccine you receive will involve an injection, and most require a booster 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 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 your body has begun to develop an immune response to the coronavirus.
Can we discard masking and other measures once we 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 contract virus which your body may quickly eradicate without developing symptoms...but you might 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, and our recovery from this pandemic will take more than a single immunization – but vaccines will be a critical part of helping us return to a more normal life.

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, but that 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 done 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 health practitioner can guide you with questions regarding a COVID vaccine. They can guide you 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 your 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 prevention and recovery plan describes measures to protect you at work, be sure to practice healthy behaviors in all settings.

Symptoms

If you are experiencing any of the following commonly recognized COVID-19 symptoms, you should consider contacting a medical practitioner to arrange for testing. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

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

Note that those with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms – and these can range from mild symptoms to severe illness. COVID 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.
Returning to the office

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:**

- Ask that all employees returning to on-site work to be fully immunized against COVID.
- Encourage employees to continue to work from home.
- Limiting 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.
- Limiting bathroom occupancy to one person at a time.
- Requiring KN95 masks 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.

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\(^1\) A 50/100,000 case incidence over a two week period was initially suggested in the spring of 2020 by the CDC. As COVID testing expanded, many more mild and asymptomatic infections are now reported, making a 7-day average more appropriate.
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.

2. **Submit the Daily Symptom Screener** at [https://forms.gle/mmL94MVWy4RzAQHX7](https://forms.gle/mmL94MVWy4RzAQHX7) THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED EVERY DAY PRIOR TO ENTERING THE WORKPLACE.

If you have been exposed to COVID

Those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID must quarantine.

Contact your healthcare provider to arrange for a COVID test. Most providers are able to provide tests quickly to anyone with symptoms. There are also a number of community test sites.

Inform HR regarding your status. This is critically important, as your exposure or a positive test could have ramifications for your coworkers and others.

- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms.
- People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.
- People who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID are not required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated against the disease and show no symptoms.

What counts 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 local public health authorities if you need to quarantine. These authorities will specify the period of quarantine, which may be as long as 14 days. The quarantine period may be shortened if you receive a negative test result after a period of time spent in quarantine.
**Quarantine Procedure cont’d:**

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 100.4F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID. If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate within your home and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider.

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


**Returning to work after a COVID infection**

Contact ICSI HR ([jaci@icsi.berkeley.edu](mailto: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 (see below).

If you tested positive and had symptoms, you cannot return to work until all the following have occurred:

- At least 24 hours have passed since a fever of 100.4 or higher has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications; and,
- COVID symptoms have improved; and,
- At least 10 days have passed since COVID symptoms first appeared.

If you tested positive but did not have symptoms, you may not return to work until a minimum of 10 days have passed since the date of specimen collection of their first positive COVID test. A negative COVID test will not be required for an employee to return to work. Although no such test shall be required, we highly encourage and will reasonably accommodate an employee who elects to return to the workplace only after receiving a negative COVID 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.