

Continue to be vigilant to avoid COVID infection

Honestly, everyone wants the pandemic to be over, but COVID-19 variants continue to threaten the unvaccinated and persons with an immune deficiency. Research indicates that individuals fully vaccinated with the Pfizer and Moderna serums are 91% protected from infection and nearly 100% effective from serious illness, hospitalization, or death. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is nearly as effective.

Great odds, but not yet perfect. Especially as infections of the new Delta variant grow in number, it is as important as ever to get vaccinated against COVID and continue to exercise preventive measures.



Kent County encourages all employees to wear a face covering when unable to maintain social distancing (3 feet of separation), in public areas like restrooms & hallways, or gathered in large groups. Please continue to be aware and avoid exposing the unvaccinated, young children, or immune compromised to COVID or the Delta variant.

Employees should continue to regularly wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water, use hand sanitizer, avoid touching the face, etc. Most important, employees that feel sick with the telltale COVID 19 symptoms should get tested and avoid interaction with co-workers or the public, even if you have been vaccinated.

According to the CDC, people infected with the Delta variant first report a headache or feeling fatigue/out of sorts. While others experience the well-known flu-like symptoms of cough, sore throat, fever, breathing issues, body aches, nausea, loss of taste or smell, congestion, etc. Some infected with the Delta variant or COVID report no symptoms at all.

Remember, whether UNVACCINATED or VACCINATED, employees MAY NOT REPORT FOR WORK if you answer “YES” to any of these questions:

- *Are you presently ill?*
- *Have you had any COVID-like illness in the past 14 days, to include Fever, Coughing, Shortness of Breath, or other Flu like Symptoms?*
- *Have you been instructed by a healthcare professional to self-quarantine?*

- *Have you been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?*

If you answer “YES” to any of the above questions,

- Promptly get a COVID-19 test. Promptly means that day or the next day at the latest.
- Promptly contact your Supervisor/Department Head & Personnel Director.
- Do not return to work until you get a negative test result.
- If positive, do not return to work until cleared by DPH or medical professional, promptly contact your Supervisor/Department Head & Personnel Director.
- Submit a copy of the test results to the Personnel Office.

If you are unsure if you have been in “close contact” with a COVID-19 positive person or someone that may be experiencing symptoms or you are unsure of your particular situation, you should contact your Department Head and/or Personnel Director. You will be asked a series of questions and instructed to get tested.

Even without the indoor mask mandate for everyone, employees must continue to immediately report COVID-19 symptoms, potential exposures, and close contact with symptomatic persons or those testing positive to their department head and the Personnel Director.

Employees out of work for a COVID-19 related reason such as symptoms; positive test; exposure or close contact to someone testing positive, with symptoms, or in close contact with another such person; screening question failure; Division of Public Health directive; quarantine/isolation order; school or childcare issues related to COVID-19; etc. must use accrued sick leave.

Employees directed to remain home should not return to the workplace for any reason until authorized/directed to do so. Employees are responsible for maintaining regular contact with their Department Head or appropriate supervisor during COVID related isolation or quarantine and after the initial call, update the Personnel Director if health conditions change. Each exposure is assessed individually based upon the specific information provided by the employee and DPH guidance.

Free COVID-19 vaccine is widely available at local pharmacies. Free COVID-19 testing at pop-up testing sites is also still widely available.

Employees with questions regarding COVID-19 testing should consult the Division of Public Health website: <https://coronavirus.delaware.gov>

Remember, if you are **UNVACCINATED**, you must continue to wear a face covering at all times at work and away from work.

Vaccinated Kent County employees are **no longer required** to wear a face covering inside or outside unless within 3-feet of other people or in a large indoor group setting without the recommended 3-foot social distancing. **A mask is strongly recommended** whenever employees are moving about in public accessed areas (restrooms, hallways, etc.) or a group setting of any size – but not required unless unvaccinated or cannot maintain 3-feet of distance/plexiglass separation.

Visitors are **not** required to wear a mask, but visitors unvaccinated against the coronavirus are encouraged to wear a mask. **No** proof of vaccination is required of anyone. **The honor system should be observed** in order to protect others.

Specific to urgent care centers, if a DVHT member presents with symptoms and is seen by a physician and the claim is coded as being physician ordered, the test would be covered. If the member visits the urgent care center and requests a test without the physician consultation, it would **not** be covered. Be sure to ask the urgent care center if COVID-19 testing is free of charge, as it may not be covered.

Please stay safe & healthy!

(posted 06/22/21)