Harvard’s Health Care and Child Care Workers Return-to-Work Testing Requirement

Who is subject to Harvard’s return-to-work testing requirement?

This requirement aligns with the CDC and MDPH guidelines. It is in place for those who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have had potential exposure to COVID-19 and fall into one of the categories below:

- Harvard’s health care workers (HCW) include:
  - All clinical and non-clinical individuals who work at Harvard University Health Services (HUHS)
  - Harvard Dental Clinic staff and employees
  - Harvard Dental School students (HSDM students doing clinical rotations may apply)
- Harvard’s child care workers (CCW) include all staff and teachers at Harvard’s six (6) child care centers in Cambridge and Allston

I am in one of these categories and have tested positive. What’s next?

To do immediately: If you test positive, you will receive an initial intake email from HUHS contact tracing team. Please respond within 24 hours to the contact tracing team (contact_tracing_questions@huhs.harvard.edu), informing them of your HCW/CCW status and your applicable path, Path 1 or Path 2.

**Path 1 (Up to Date on COVID Vaccinations):** If you are up to date on your COVID vaccinations per CDC guidance, while you are otherwise exempt from Harvard’s testing requirement for 90 days, there is a testing requirement to return to work. After isolating for 5 full days, there are two opportunities to test to return to work via a PCR or antigen test.

- **Step 1: Test on day 5.**
  - If the test result is negative, you can return to work on day 6, pending resolving symptoms and no fever for 24 hours. You must continue to follow strict mask-wearing, do not eat, travel, or socialize with others through day 10.
  - If your day 5 test result remains positive, you must continue to isolate and can retest on day 7.

- **Step 2: Test on day 7 (if applicable)**
  - If negative, you can return to work on day 8, pending resolving symptoms and no fever for 24 hours.
  - If positive on day 7, you must remain in isolation until day 10, and can return to work on day 11, pending resolving symptoms and no fever for 24 hours.

- See Clearance to Return to Work below on reporting your day 5 and, if applicable, day 7 test result(s) (both positive and negative). Pending the result(s) and symptom resolution, you will receive a discharge email to return to work.

**Path 2 (Unvaccinated or Not Up to Date on COVID Vaccinations):** If you are not up to date on your COVID vaccinations per CDC guidance, you will not be able to return to work until day 11. Please inform the contact tracers via email that you will be proceeding with Path 2. You do not need to test on day 10 to return to work on day 11. You will receive a discharge email from HUHS contact tracing team to return to work pending resolving symptoms and no fever for 24 hours.

I have been identified as a close contact (more than 15 minutes over 24 hours) of someone who has tested positive for covid-19. Can I come to campus?

After exposure, return-to-work testing guidance is determined by your quarantine requirements as outlined on the Exposure PDF for Health Care and Child Care Workers. Please ensure you understand your quarantine risk category, then use below guidance for next steps on return-to-work testing.
Not Required to Quarantine (Category 1): Take a PCR or antigen test on day 1 following potential exposure. If the test result is negative, you can return to work on day 2. Take a test on day 5 post-exposure, even if your test on day 1 was negative. See Clearance to Return to Work below for next steps. You must use appropriate PPE at work and strictly mask around others through day 10. You do not need to communicate your test result to HUHS unless your test result is positive. If the test result is positive, move to isolate immediately, and follow the Isolation Requirements and Protocols.

Required to Quarantine (Category 2): Take a test on day 1 as noted in the Exposure PDF. Even if the test result is negative, quarantine for five full days. Then take a PCR or antigen test on day 5 following potential exposure. If the day 5 test result is negative, you can return to work on day 6. See Clearance to Return to Work below for next steps. This return-to-work test can also count toward your day 5 test, which is noted in the Exposure PDF. You must use appropriate PPE at work and strictly mask around others through day 10. If the test result is positive, move to isolate immediately, and follow the Isolation Requirements and Protocols.

How do I receive clearance to return to work from HUHS?

All negative and positive test results for return-to-work testing must be communicated to the HUHS Contact Tracing team, unless otherwise noted above. For return-to-work test results, please call (617) 496-2288 to verbally communicate or email contact_tracing_questions@huhs.harvard.edu using subject line: Health care/child care return-to-work test result. Contact tracing will work with you to determine your isolation/quarantine end date and provide you discharge instructions.