COVID-19 and Food Employees

Veronica Bryant, Emergency Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator
NCDPH, Environmental Health Section
Symptoms of 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
Communicable Disease Law

• COVID-19 pandemic is not regulated through Food Code, or 15A NCAC 18A .2600 rules
• Permits cannot be suspended, no intent to suspend or immediate suspension
• Local Health Directors have authority under Communicable Disease Law
• LHD use imminent health hazard, isolation and quarantine law
• Up to the LHD to determine which staff are used for CD law
Employee Screening

• Have you had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19, or have you been advised by a health department employee that you should be in quarantine?

• Since you last worked, have you had any of these symptoms?
  • Fever
  • Chills
  • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  • New cough
  • New loss of taste or smell
Symptomatic Employees

• If employees arrive symptomatic or develop symptoms during the day, they should be excluded immediately.
• Have a plan for how and where.
• Prepare to clean and disinfect areas where employees separate.
• Employee should follow up with healthcare professional.
• Employees remain out of work until test results are received.
Key Terms

• Isolation: Separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.

• Quarantine: Separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick.
If an Employee Tests Positive

- Test results take between 2-10 days to be reported
- Employees cannot work while waiting for results
- Local health department will attempt to contact an individual within 24 hours of positive results being received.
- Contact tracers reach out within 24 hours as well
Contact Tracing for Positive Employees

• Contact tracers reach out within 24 hours of positive result
• Positive case should share all close contacts
• Close contact means within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes, does not have to be consecutive
• 3 exposures of 5 minutes within a shift, or 10 times of close contact for 1-2 minutes could be considered close contact
• Both masked and unmasked interactions count for close contact
Close Contacts to a Positive Case

• NC DHHS is not allowing asymptomatic close contacts to continue to work

• CDC Critical Infrastructure Guidance not being applied to food service workers at this time

• All close contacts to a positive case must be excluded from work and self quarantine for 14 days from last exposure

• Close contact status can be work related or non-work related
Returning to Work

• Using testing strategy, employee can return to work after
  • Resolution of fever **and**
  • Improvement in respiratory symptoms **and**
  • Negative results of COVID-19 test from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected ≥24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens)
Returning to Work

• Using symptom strategy employee can return to work after:
  • At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever and
  • improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
  • At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
Count on Me NC

• Collaborative Program between NCRLA, NCDHHS, NCSU, and Visit NC

• www.countonmenc.org
Questions?

Veronica Bryant
Emergency Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator
919-218-6943 mobile
veronica.bryant@dhhs.nc.gov