

Infectious Diseases and Office Attendance Guidance

Introduction

In May 2023 the Covid pandemic was declared to be no longer a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

This announcement has been misinterpreted by some people to mean that the Covid pandemic has been declared as finished. That isn't the case, and the WHO says the pandemic is ongoing and remains a global health risk.

At the ICO we still need to ensure that our response to managing Covid is robust and that colleagues are aware of what they need to do should they test positive for Covid, or suspect that they are positive, but feel well enough to work.

To help ensure that our offices remain a safe and healthy place for staff, we have developed this guidance to advise you about going into the office if you contract one of the listed common health conditions.

This is intended to help you and your manager decide if you can attend the office, or if you should decide to work at home.

Of course, if you are not well enough to work then you should report in to your manager as being sick. The purpose of this guidance is not to make people work when they are not well enough, but to provide better understanding about the appropriate actions for working when you experience one of these health conditions.

We have drawn upon the Government's guidance for managing infectious diseases, extracting the guidance for the conditions which are most likely to be observed in the workplace.

| Condition | Action required |
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| Covid-19 | If you test positive stay away from the office for 5 days after you took the test. Inform HR of your positive test. |
| Athlete's Foot | No requirement to stay away from the office, but do not use shower facilities. |
| Chicken Pox and Shingles | Stay away from the office until all blisters have crusted over (usually 5 to 6 days after the start of the rash). Inform HR if you have been in the office within the 2 days before the rash appeared. |

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| Conjunctivitis | No requirement to stay away from the office, but prompt treatment and good hand hygiene is necessary. Working at home may, however, help prevent wider spread. |
| Diarrhoea and vomiting | May be an indication of norovirus, food poisoning, gastroenteritis, or other infections. Diarrhoea is defined as 3 or more episodes within a 24 hour period, rather than a one-off occurrence. Stay away from the office until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. |
| E. coli STEC | Characterised as diarrhoea, abdominal pain, sometimes vomiting and fever. Stay away from the office until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. |
| Food poisoning | Characterised by vomiting and diarrhoea. Diarrhoea is defined as 3 or more episodes within a 24 hour period, rather than a one-off occurrence. Stay away from the office until 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped. |
| Glandular fever | Symptoms present as fatigue, aching muscles, sore throat, fever, swollen neck glands and occasionally jaundice. No requirement to stay away from the office. Good hand hygiene is necessary. |
| Hand, foot and mouth disease | No requirement to stay away from the office if you are feeling well. Good hand hygiene is necessary. |
| Head lice | No requirement to stay away from the office. |
| Hepatitis A | Stay away from the office for 7 days after the onset of jaundice or from the onset of symptoms if no jaundice is present. |
| Hepatitis B | No requirement to stay away from the office for those with chronic Hepatitis B. People with acute Hepatitis B will typically be too ill to attend work. Speak with HR/H&S for advice regarding exposure of blood or bodily fluids. |
| Hepatitis C | No requirement to stay away from the office. Good hand hygiene necessary. Speak with HR/H&S for advice regarding exposure of blood or bodily fluids. |

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| HIV | No requirement to stay away from the office. Speak with HR/H&S for advice regarding risk of exposure to blood or bodily fluids. |
| Impetigo | Stay away from the office until all sores or blisters are crusted over or until 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment. |
| Influenza (Flu) | Stay away from the office until you have recovered. However, there is no need to stay away from the office if you have mild respiratory illness, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or mild cough but are otherwise well. |
| Measles | Stay away from the office until 4 days after the onset of the rash (where the date of the rash onset is day 0). |
| Meningitis | Stay away from the office until you have recovered. Inform HR – The UK Health Security Agency will need to be informed if 2 cases of meningitis occur within an office within 4 weeks. |
| Meningococcal meningitis and septicaemia (sepsis) | Immediate medical attention needed. Stay away from the office until treated with antibiotics and recovered. Inform HR – UK Health Security Agency need to be informed if a case of meningococcal disease has arisen in the office. |
| Monkeypox | Stay away from the office until the rash has scabbed, all the scabs have fallen off and a fresh layer of skin has formed underneath. People who have had close contact with people diagnosed with monkeypox are advised to contact their local health protection team. |
| Mumps | Stay away from the office until 5 days after the onset of swelling and you are well enough to return. |
| Norovirus | Characterised by nausea, diarrhoea and vomiting. Stay away from the office until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. |
| Rubella (German Measles) | Stay away from the office for 5 days after the appearance of the rash. Avoid people who you know to be pregnant. |
| Scabies | Stay away from the office until after the first treatment has been completed. |