



Arkansas Department of Health

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Guidance for Employers about When Workers Recovered From COVID-19 Can Return To Work

When can my employee return to work after being diagnosed with COVID-19?

In general, employees can return to work once they are removed from isolation because they are considered to have recovered from COVID-19.

- **Those who have been isolating at home:** Patients isolating at home are generally removed from isolation once:
 - a) *At least 1 day* (24 hours) have passed since fever (temperature greater than 100.4°F) has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough, shortness of breath); **and,**
 - b) *At least 10 days* have passed *since symptoms first appeared.*
- **Those hospitalized due to COVID-19:** Patients who were hospitalized during their course of illness due to COVID-19 may be removed from isolation using similar guidelines for patients isolating at home. However, depending on how severe their illness was or how their symptoms have been during their improvement, there may be additional requirements. In either case, once they are removed from isolation they are generally able to return to work.

Patients who have recovered from COVID-19 will be evaluated by a Public Health Nurse to ensure they meet the above criteria for being removed from isolation. They will then receive a letter of notification from the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) when they have met criteria for being able to leave isolation. This letter can be shared with employers to show that they can return to work. **ADH strongly discourages employers from requiring non-health care workers to have a negative COVID-19 test before returning to work.** This is because some individuals may continue to test positive even after recovery criteria is met, and symptoms have resolved. Individuals who continue to test positive *after being removed from isolation* pose little risk to others.

Employees removed from isolation should wear a cloth face mask when returning to work in accordance with [Arkansas Executive Order 20-43](#). This Executive Order also applies to people in public settings where individuals cannot remain at least six feet apart.

Please note that employees who are health care workers may be asked to meet additional requirements by their employers. These employees should contact their supervisor before returning to work.