

Health PEI Staff/Physician Respiratory Illness Reporting and Work Restriction Protocol

Health PEI has moved into a state of managing COVID-19 as we do with any other staff illness. As we launch the Respiratory Illness (COVID-19 and Influenza) Immunization and Management Policy we will continue to experience waves of respiratory illness amongst healthcare workers and the following protocol will remain in place to protect our system, patients and most importantly our staff.

The protocol will allow us to monitor staffing pressures due to respiratory illness in real time to support operations.

As a result of these changes and pressures the following protocol is being maintained

Update Effective September 26, 2023:

Managers/supervisors/designates must complete the following online form for all staff reporting a respiratory illness:

The Health PEI Employee Respiratory Illness Reporting Form is available at <https://rstudiohiu.gpei.ca/form/contact-tracing/>. Please complete this form for all respiratory illness, influenza and COVID-positive staff cases, even if there are no workplace staff exposures.

The online forms must be completed within 24 hours

***PLEASE NOTE EMAIL ADDRESS - If you have any questions please contact:
HPEIEmployeeHealth@ihis.org***

Respiratory Illness Guidance and Work Restrictions

The 5 days isolation **and** the mandate to test for COVID-19 will no longer be required for staff experiencing respiratory illness symptoms. Testing is not routine for COVID-19 or influenza, unless clinically indicated.

Respiratory illnesses are expressed as fever greater than (38.5c)* AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause). Signs and symptoms of respiratory illness include; fever* or feeling feverish/chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, and fatigue.

** It is important to note that not everyone with a respiratory illness will have a fever.*

If staff become unwell during their shift, don a mask.

Staff with respiratory illnesses can return to work under the following circumstances:

- Symptoms have markedly improved and fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medication, such as acetaminophen. The exception is a cough which may linger longer than other symptoms.
- They feel well enough to come to work.
- They can adhere to work isolation restrictions: diligent mask use at all times, good hand hygiene, and eating/drinking alone. Work isolation restrictions will remain in place until 5 full days since their symptoms began.

Healthcare workers should be reminded that adherence to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette after returning to work is always important. The importance of performing frequent hand hygiene (per the 4 moments of hand hygiene and contact with respiratory secretions) should be reinforced if symptoms such as cough and sneezing are still present.