



## Coronavirus and Retail Workers

Retail workers may have concerns about COVID-19 transmission in a place of business, such as a grocery store. Below are answers to some frequently asked questions:

### **What is the risk of infection with COVID-19 for those who work in retail stores?**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Interactions with a person with symptomatic laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection, such as walking by the person or being briefly in the same room presents **no identifiable risk**.
- Being in the same indoor environment (e.g. classroom, hospital waiting room) as a person with symptomatic laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection for a prolonged period of time, but without close contact (e.g. closer than 6 feet for at least 10 minutes or longer) is considered **low risk**.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/risk-assessment.html>

Based on these definitions, most retail workers have no identifiable increased risk of COVID-19 infection.

### **How is COVID-19 transmitted to others?**

COVID-19, like many other viruses, is transmitted through droplets that are released when a person coughs, sneezes, or exhales. If you are close to another person, you can inhale those droplets and therefore become infected.

You can also get the virus on your hands, and then ingest the virus when you touch your mouth, nose, or eyes. This is why handwashing is important.

### **Can we catch COVID-19 from collecting money or from touching items that an infected person has touched?**

Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to up to 72 hours on surfaces, however, based on what is currently known about COVID-19 and similar coronaviruses, transmission to people from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented.

Cleaning/disinfecting of commonly touched surfaces such as credit card machines is a best practice to prevent COVID-19 and other illnesses in community settings.

Cashiers should wash their hands frequently, especially before touching the face or eating and after handling money or other items from the public.

## **What if I develop symptoms of COVID-19 infection?**

It typically takes between 2-14 days after exposure to someone who has COVID-19 to develop symptoms. The primary symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Most people (at least 80%) develop only mild symptoms, and a few (approximately 5%) develop severe symptoms.

COVID-19 infection will most likely become widespread throughout the community, and therefore you may develop symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath) from an exposure anywhere in the community, not necessarily from your workplace.

If you are sick, even if you think it is just a cold, you should stay at home until you are better and fever free for 24 hours. If you have been diagnosed or think you may have COVID-19, you should be fever free for 72 hours (without taking fever reducing medications) and feeling better before returning to work.

Your health care provider is the best person to evaluate your symptoms. Please call your health care provider's office. If you do not have a health care provider, Munson Medical Center has established a hotline where you may speak with a nurse who will provide further guidance and connect you with a provider. The hotline number is 231-935-0951.

## **Should I be tested for COVID-19?**

**You cannot be tested for COVID-19 infection if you do not have symptoms.**

If you do have symptoms, you must contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine if testing is warranted. There is limited capacity to run these tests, so typically only those who are at highest risk are tested.

Since we do not have the capacity to test everyone, and we know that there are likely people with mild illness who have not sought healthcare or been tested. So, whether you are tested or not – if you are sick, stay at home.

## **How can I protect myself and my family?**

**Handwashing and limiting close contact** (within 6 feet for prolonged periods of time) with people other than those in your household are the two most important steps you can take to protect yourself and those around you from illness.

Consider workplace measures, such as spacing out breaks and frequent disinfecting of breakroom and frequently touched surfaces.

If you are ill, stay home. As much as possible, keep a distance from household members (e.g. sleep in a separate bedroom, stay across the room from others in common areas, etc..

## **Where can I find information about COVID-19?**

[www.michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus)  
[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Michigan COVID hotline: 1-888-535-6136  
Munson COVID hotline: 231-935-0951  
Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department: 231-882-2197