

General COVID-19 FAQs

Below is a list of frequently asked questions, including general examples. If you have a more specific question not found below, please contact your supervisor or HRBP.

Can associates be informed when positive tests are identified? If I know that there have been positive tests, I would feel more inclined to take it upon myself to be tested if I experience symptoms that could otherwise be identified as cold/flu.

If an associate were to test positive, we will proceed with our contact tracing procedure. You will be notified if the Company is informed that you may have been in “close contact” with the COVID-19 positive associate. In general, this means, if you were in close contact and less than 6 feet apart for a cumulative amount of time of 15 minutes or longer during any 24-hour period with the associate 2 days prior to the individual’s first symptoms and up until their last day worked. However, the definition of close contact may vary in accordance with state/provincial and local law.

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

In accordance with CDC guidance, “quarantine” is for people who may have been in “close contact” with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. These individuals should quarantine for 10 days from the last date of close contact or exposure to see if they begin having symptoms. This helps prevent the spread that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.

Currently, “close contact” is defined as being within 6 feet of a COVID-19 positive individual, unmasked, for at least 15 minutes in a 24 hour period. “Exposure” includes intimate family contact or contact with the respiratory droplets of an individual who is known to have tested positive for COVID-19 or is presumed to be COVID-19 positive based on their symptoms.

“Isolation” is for people who have symptoms of COVID-19 or receive a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. These individuals should not come in contact with other people for 10 days from symptom onset or their test date. The current CDC recommendation is to isolate for at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and at least 24-hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving. Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or month after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

If you have been told to quarantine or are isolating after having tested positive for COVID-19, please contact your supervisor or HRBP.

I think I may have worked with someone who tested positive. Will the Company share their name so I can confirm if I am at risk?

We will not share the name of the associate who tested positive for COVID-19 due to privacy laws but will follow our contact tracing procedures. The HR team will contact anyone who has been identified as having been in close contact with an associate who tests positive. In general, this means, if you were in close contact and less than 6 feet apart for a cumulative amount of time of 15 minutes or longer during any 24-hour period with the associate 2 days prior to the individual’s first symptoms and up until their last day worked. However, the definition of close contact may vary in accordance with state/provincial and local law. If you or anyone from your team starts exhibiting symptoms, please self-quarantine and contact your supervisor and HRBP during your self-quarantine.

For those who come in close contact with an individual who tests positive for COVID-19, what does the definition of a “10 day self-quarantine from all daily activities” mean?

Quarantine is used to keep someone *who has been in close contact with an individual who tested positive for COVID-19* away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from their state or local health department.

Following exposure to someone who is COVID-19 positive, how long will it take for my COVID-19 test to be positive if I have contracted the virus?

The amount of time to become positive depends on the test and the person. There is not a clear cut number of days that you need to wait to see if you are positive. Most people will test positive a week after being exposed, but there are certainly cases that are longer. The closer you are tested to the date of the possible exposure, the less likely the test will be positive (even if you contracted COVID-19).

Who should I inform that I may have been exposed to a person who tested positive for COVID-19?

Please follow our internal reporting procedures and contact your supervisor and HRBP. Note, however, you do not need to report exposure to COVID-19 if you are fully vaccinated (i.e. at least two weeks have passed since your single-shot vaccine or two weeks have passed since your second dose) and have not experienced any symptoms.

If you, or someone who resides in your home, is diagnosed with COVID-19 please call 1-877-322-0236 to report the diagnosis to the Global Asset Protection team.

We are currently following the CDC guidelines that if you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19 and are currently exhibiting symptoms, you should first inform your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and exposure. Your healthcare provider can then advise on proper medical care and appropriate next steps, including anyone to inform of your potential exposure. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and are exhibiting signs and symptoms, you can find additional CDC recommendations [here](#).

If you are not experiencing signs and symptoms of illness, we are taking guidance from the CDC that you continue to practice social-distancing and monitor for any future symptoms of COVID-19. If you may have come in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but are not exhibiting symptoms, please follow the CDC instructions on how to protect yourself and your family [here](#).

I've been exposed to COVID-19 and need to quarantine. Is there a way I can shorten the 10-day quarantine period?

Yes. If you are **fully vaccinated**, you do not need to quarantine. However, you should get tested 3-5 days after exposure to a known or suspected COVID-19 case.

If you are **not fully vaccinated**, you can shorten the quarantine period if you go the first 7 days without any symptoms and between days 5-7 you take a COVID-19 test and receive a negative result. However, the quarantine cannot end earlier than day 7 if you are quarantining based on exposure due to a COVID-19 individual.

In order to take advantage of these shorter quarantine options you must still follow the criteria below:

- You must not have exhibited COVID-19 symptoms during the shortened quarantine period.
- You must continue to monitor themselves for symptoms for the remainder of the 10-day self-quarantine period.
- You must strictly adhere to mitigation strategies after exiting self-quarantine – *g.*, mask use, social distancing, avoiding crowds, etc.

A co-worker has a persistent cough and/or is exhibiting signs of a respiratory illness. Will AEO ask this associate to go home as a precautionary measure?

Yes. AEO has consistently said (not only this year, but during previous cold and flu seasons) that associates who are sick (whether it be from a common cold, flu, or other virus) should stay home and return to work only when they are not contagious and are feeling better.

Consistent with this approach, the CDC advises employees “who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness . . . to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants).”

If I am asked to go home because I am exhibiting symptoms of a respiratory illness, will I be required to produce a doctor’s note before coming back to work?

Any associate that is sick (whether it be from a common cold, flu, or other virus) should stay home and only return to work only when they are not contagious and are feeling better. A doctor’s note is not needed.

If you have received a positive COVID-19 test result and have remained out of work for at least 10 days, a doctor’s note is required to return to the workplace.

What is AEO doing to disinfect and clean the workplace?

AEO has taken a number of steps to ensure our facilities are being thoroughly cleaned. This includes increased cleaning of touchpoints, hard surfaces, cafés, kitchens and restrooms throughout the day and nightly. Additional hand-sanitizers, disinfectant spray and masks are also being provided for use by associates.

We are asking all associates to make sure they are maintaining high-standards of hygiene, including washing hands and properly cleaning. We are also continuing to evaluate and develop additional cleaning protocols.

Who is at higher risk for COVID-19?

Some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Older adults
- Smokers
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease

- Diabetes
- Lung disease
- Obesity
- An immune compromised state
- Chronic Kidney Disease

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease. More information from the CDC can be found [here](#).

I've been working from home because of COVID-19. Is there any guidance on what types of expenses can be reimbursed?

Yes, the [Work From Home Support Policy](#) outlines what type of expenses are reimbursable for associates who are working from home because of COVID-19. If you have any additional questions, please contact your supervisor or HRBP.

I need to take time away from work for reasons related to COVID-19. Who should I contact?

Depending on your work location, you may be eligible for paid sick leave. Please contact your HRBP or Benefits (corploa@ae.com) to discuss your situation.

Are there benefits to wearing a mask?

Wearing a mask can decrease your chance of getting or spreading COVID-19, as well as a host of other diseases. We saw much fewer cases of flu this year and that is likely due to a combination of masking, social distancing, and frequently washing hands. It is helpful to understand your risks (your medical conditions, vaccination status, community spread of COVID-19, travel plans etc.) and make decisions accordingly.

Are there resources about vaccines and kids ?

Click [here](#) to access "*Vaccinated Parents, Unvaccinated kids*", published June 10, 2021 in the HUB at Johns Hopkins University, by Keri Althoff, Johns Hopkins epidemiologist and mother of three.

Click [here](#) to access "*The benefits and risks of COVID-19 vaccines for kids*", published July 2, 2021 in the HUB at Johns Hopkins University, by Katie Pierce.