



## **Introduction**

Many workplaces are facing challenges as a result of the recent Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. With restaurants, gyms, and other entertainment centers closing across the counter, education and communication are critical tools in preparing for and reacting to this situation.

This week we are going to review some commonly asked questions, discuss the preventative steps workplaces can take, and provide resources to help you gather more information.

## **Monday – What is the COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is a strain of coronavirus that was first identified in humans in 2019. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are transmitted between animals and people and can cause mild or severe illnesses.

In humans, these viruses are none to cause infections of the respiratory system and can even result in more severe illnesses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Currently, there is no vaccine for COVID-19 and prevention measures are often overlooked, causing the virus to spread very quickly.

## **Tuesday –What are the Symptoms?**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to those of the seasonal flu.

While not present in all those infected, the most common symptoms are fever, tiredness, and dry cough. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually.

Around 80% of people who catch COVID-19, recover without complications or needing hospitalization. However, for individuals with pre-existing health conditions or a weakened immune system, COVID-19 can become deadly.

## **Wednesday – How is COVID-19 Transmitted?**

COVID-19 is highly contagious and spreads very easily.

This disease can spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth which are spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs or exhales. These droplets can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to a few days. Other people then catch COVID-19 by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Another method of transmission is if a person is in close proximity to an infected individual and breathes the same air they cough or exhale out. Keeping a distance from all individuals during this time is an easy way to limit your exposure to COVID-19.



## Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 12 – March 23-27, 2020

### COVID-19

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#### **Thursday – Prevention Methods**

Preventing exposure to COVID-19 is an important step in fighting this virus. The following steps are recommended to reduce risk of exposure within the workplace:

- Develop an infectious disease, preparedness, and response plan to provide employees with protections against that help them fight COVID-19.
- Prepare to implement basic infection prevention measures based on government agencies recommendations.
- Develop policies and procedures for prompt identification and isolation of sick employees.
- Develop, implement, and communicate workplace flexibilities and protections.
- Implement workplace controls including:
  - Engineering controls such as air filtration, increased ventilation or physical separation.
  - Administrative controls such as encouraging sick workers to stay home, minimizing contact between workers, clients and customers as well as replacing face to face meetings with virtual meetings.
  - Utilizing appropriate personal protective equipment as necessary.
- Keep hands and the items you use daily clean. Hand washing and sanitizing frequently used tools is an important step in staying healthy.

#### **Friday – Open Discussion and Resources**

This week we've covered a lot of information regarding COVID-19. Below are some questions to address with your group and resources you can refer to gather more information.

- What steps are being taken in your workplace to prevent the spread of COVID-19?
- What precautions are you taking at work or at home?
- What further steps do you think could be taken at your workplace to prevent spreading the illness?