

Health update

Issue #4

June 3, 2020

Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

Overview

According to the Johns Hopkins University, as of June 1, 2020, the Coronavirus SARS-coV-2, has infected more than 6.2 million people worldwide (1.8+ million in the United States) and killed more than 374,000 (104,000+ in the United States).

Source: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Symptom and transmission update

A team of researchers from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine have found that the eyes create the protein called ACE-2, making them a target for the virus. “Ocular surface cells including conjunctiva are susceptible to infection by SARS-CoV-2 and could therefore serve as a portal of entry, as well as a reservoir for person-to-person transmission of this virus” according to one of the researchers. This may be why some patients have developed conjunctivitis, an inflammation of the eye that causes it to become red and infected. Will that change the use and deployment of PPE for your workforce?

Testing update

Viral Testing

Viral tests are used to determine if a person is currently infected with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. A positive test result means an active infection is present. There are two types of viral tests, Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and the more recently approved antigen testing.

Some tests are point-of-care tests, meaning results may be available at the testing site in less than an hour. Other tests must be sent to a laboratory and can take several days to report the results.

Source: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html>

Antibody Testing (Serology)

Unlike viral detection methods, antibody tests determine whether the individual being tested had a previous infection—even if that person never showed symptoms. Although serologic tests should not be used at this time to determine if an individual is immune, these tests can help determine the proportion of a population previously infected with SARS-CoV-2 and provide information about populations that may have immunity. Due to the limitations of these tests, the CDC recommends:

- Serologic test results should not be used to make decisions about grouping persons residing in or being admitted to congregate settings, such as schools, dormitories, or correctional facilities.
- Serologic test results should not be used to make decisions about returning persons to the workplace.
- Until more information is available about the dynamics of IgA detection in serum, testing for IgA antibodies is not recommended.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antibody-tests-guidelines.html>

Testing availability and access is highly localized in geographic areas in the United States. There continues to be confusion as to which test(s) require a doctor's order, the availability of tests, where the tests are administered, and how long it takes for test results to be returned. Buck is working with clients in various geographies to identify resources and solutions.

Treatment and vaccine update

Currently, there are 224 treatments being studied and 145 vaccines in development. Remdesivir, an antiviral medication, has received U.S. Federal Drug Administration Emergency Use Authorization. Remdesivir is administered intravenously and is only being given to hospitalized individuals with moderate to severe disease. Seventy vaccines are in human trials and there has been some speculation that a vaccine may be available as early as the beginning of 2021.

Sources: <https://www.fda.gov/media/137566/download> and <https://www.milkeninstitute.org/covid-19-tracker>

Considerations when your employees physically return to the facility

As Americans get back to work during this unprecedented pandemic, business owners are understandably concerned about providing a healthy and safe environment for workers and visitors. Guidance for return-to-work strategies are changing each day and employer policies must be individualized to meet the needs of their organization.

<i>Facilities and Equipment</i>	<i>Management and Communications</i>	<i>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess job hazards for feasibility of engineering controls • Ensure ventilation and water systems operate properly • Modify workspaces to maintain social distancing. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Configure partitions as a barrier shield ○ Move electronic payment reader away from cashier ○ Use verbal announcements, signage, and visual cues to promote social distancing ○ Remove / rearrange furniture ○ Provide remote shopping alternatives (e.g., delivery, pick-up) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor state and local public health communications about COVID-19 • Encourage sick workers to report symptoms, stay home, and follow CDC guidance • Develop strategies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ manage worker concerns ○ communicate with workers • Remind workers of available support services • Communicate to partners, suppliers, other contractors on policies and practices • Encourage social distancing and the use of cloth face coverings (if appropriate) in the workplace • Use technology to promote social distancing (e.g., telework and virtual meetings) • Cancel group events • Close / limit use of shared spaces • Ask customers who are ill to stay home • Consider policies that encourage flexible sick leave and alternative work schedules. • Schedule stocking during off-peak hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct workplace hazard assessment • Determine what PPE is needed for their workers' specific job duties based on hazards and other controls present • Select and provide appropriate PPE, and instruction for proper use, to workers' who require these resources
<p style="text-align: center;">Cleaning and Disinfection</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces, (e.g., counters, shelving, displays) • Provide employees with disposable disinfectant wipes, cleaner, or sprays that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 		

Provide employees with training on:

- Policies to reduce the spread of COVID-19
- General hygiene
- Symptoms, what to do if sick
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Cloth face covers
- Social distancing
- Use of PPE
- Safe work practices

Stress management

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html#more-changes>

Health briefing — Innovation in testing and treatment for the workplace

Learn more

This health brief on the clinical topics and innovations surrounding the SARS-coV-2 virus and COVID-19 disease was prepared by Buck's Health Intelligence practice.

For more information, contact us at **866-355-6647** or talktous@buck.com.

The information in this article is provided for general information purposes only and is not intended to address your requirements. While we will endeavor to keep the Information accurate, we cannot and do not guarantee the accuracy of the Information, and we accept no responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any loss or damage which may arise from using or relying on the Information.

