

As the weather gets colder and we start spending more time indoors it is natural to see an increase in acute respiratory infections. Already this year our region is experiencing high levels of COVID and has seen cases of influenza and RSV. Each of these infections have similar symptoms (fever, cough, headache, extreme fatigue, nasal congestion, runny nose etc). While we are testing for COVID other infections (influenza, RSV or the common cold) are not specifically being tested for and therefore not diagnosed. In an effort to protect the individuals we support from any of these infections, and to have a consistent approach for staff returning to work after an infection, Ongwanada is updating return to work instructions.

When staff present with any respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, headache, extreme fatigue, nasal congestion, runny nose etc) they are required to do the following:

- Do not come into work. Contact your immediate supervisor or after hours supervisor to report your symptoms.
- Complete a rapid antigen test. If the test is positive this information must be communicated to Occupational Health. If the test is negative, PCR testing is still available and should be completed through Ongwanada Pharmacy (contact Diane Milina at ext 1139 to book an appt)
- Remain home from work until symptoms have been IMPROVING and no fever present for 24hrs. Symptoms do not have to be completely resolved to return to work but they must be improving.
- When returning to work staff **MUST** wear an N95 mask until the end of 10 days since start of symptoms. An N95 mask **MUST** be worn regardless of the type of infection the staff member may have had.

With the world moving from a pandemic to an endemic atmosphere, Ongwanada's Attendance Awareness Program needs to be modified to reflect this reality. Effective immediately Covid infection absences will be treated the same as absences for any other respiratory infections and will no longer be exempted from the Attendance Awareness Program. If you have any questions concerning the Attendance Awareness Program please reach out to Amy Kent, HR Specialist, [akent@ongwanada.com](mailto:akent@ongwanada.com) or at ex. 1152.

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