



“As we ease back to work and routines, the guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) around frequent handwashing, keeping physical distance between others and staying home when unwell are still crucial. It’s up to every individual to do our part to ensure a healthy work environment where everyone feels safe, heard and protected.”

—Bonu Kapoor-Mohimen, MD, 98point6 Medical Director, Care Coordination & Population Health

The Workplace Meets the “New Normal”:

Your Guide to Staying Informed and Empowered for a Safe, Healthy Return

Along with the pleasure of reconnecting with our workplace friends, teams and routines will be the understanding that this new reality will be different and evolving. And while there will be some uncertainty in the months to come, the path forward starts with trusted, reliable information and a commitment to protecting your health and others’. Conversations around these key topics will help get you started.

BACK-TO-WORK GO BAG

In addition to increased cleaning and disinfecting practices, sharing of common items should be avoided whenever possible. Although your workplace will have some of these, it doesn’t hurt to have your own supply of personal essentials and emergency must-haves such as:

- Face covering
- Hand sanitizer
- Hand soap
- Tissues
- Disinfecting wipes
- Disposable plates and cutlery
- Reusable mug/tumbler/water bottle
- Headset
- Office supplies (tape dispenser, scissors, dry erase markers)

From Risk Assessment to Action

WHAT WE KNOW FOR SURE: In terms of COVID-19, there are actually three types of “risks” every individual should be aware of, especially when considering a return to the workplace.

DEFINED	COVID-19 EXAMPLE
PERSONAL RISK	
Personal health factors that put you at risk for severe disease or complications.	If you’re over age 65 or have underlying conditions.
FAMILY RISK	
Same high-risk health factors, but pertaining to those close to you, perhaps in your household.	If your child has diabetes or you care for a parent over age 65.
WORKPLACE RISK	
According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), worker risk of occupational exposure can be broken into four categories—very high, high, medium and lower (caution). Factors like on-the-job contact with those infected or the general public determine your risk category.	Healthcare workers and first responders in close contact with the sick fall into “very high” or “high medium” categories; retail salespeople, who have considerable contact with the general public, might fall into “medium.” According to OSHA, most American workers will likely fall in the lower or medium exposure risk levels.

WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU NOW: If you have concerns regarding your personal, family or workplace risk related to COVID-19, start a dialogue with your employer. As part of their Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan, there will likely be options for flexibility that will help you feel more comfortable.

The Mind-Body-Pandemic Connection

WHAT WE KNOW FOR SURE: It's a fact: **chronic stress can have a detrimental impact on our physical and emotional health**, negatively influencing body functions including digestion, sleep, blood pressure and our immune system and exacerbating existing conditions such as depression and anxiety.

From the isolation of physical distancing to worries about being in public, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with an entirely unique set of stressors. This, in addition to valid concerns about the health of ourselves and our loved ones, is compounded by an atmosphere of uncertainty and a loss of control.

The common thread? Though separated by 6 feet of distance, we are all feeling the impact of this difficult, unprecedented time. **You are not alone and you are not powerless.**

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU NOW: Research shows that emotional suppression is linked to poorer immune health, and now's the time to feel unstoppable! Let the negativity out through **activities like journaling, talking with friends or meditation.** Experts also recommend **regular moderate exercise** and **7–9 hours of sleep** per night to improve immune regulation, lower risk of illness and reduce the risk of depression.

If you have behavioral health concerns, there may be resources available to you through your employer that can offer support and guidance. Don't feel uncomfortable about reaching out and understanding your benefit options.



98point6®

We're Here for You

If you're experiencing any medical concerns or simply feel the need to connect with a primary care physician, 98point6's virtual care clinic is available 24/7. By taking advantage of text-based, on-demand care, you can receive trusted guidance and peace of mind anytime, from anywhere.

Since the start of COVID-19, a survey from Qualtrics¹ uncovered the following statistics from workers in all different industries, positions and levels:



of people report higher levels of stress since the outbreak of COVID-19.



say they have greater anxiety since the outbreak.



say they are more emotionally exhausted.

HEALTHY HABITS FOR THE WIN

- ✓ **Basic hygiene** (wash your hands, don't touch your face) and respiratory etiquette (covering your cough, staying home when sick) were always key workplace considerations, but now more than ever, it's imperative everyone go the extra mile.
- ✓ Know that the guidelines around **continued wearing of masks and maintaining physical distance** are still uncertain, and may vary based on geographic location or your employer, workplace or industry.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for **workplace modifications** like increased space or physical barriers between workstations, limitations on conference room capacity and more vigilance around cleaning and disinfecting personal and common areas.
- ✓ **Understand and accept** that the workplace you return to will be different and so will the attitude and temperament of your co-workers. As a result, the day-to-day may move along more slowly and the atmosphere may even be more emotionally-charged. Try to maintain a positive attitude, grounded in supporting one another.
- ✓ As we discover the ups and downs of this new reality, **everyone's feedback counts.** From questions around office cleaning procedures to personal concerns about getting back to work with your children still at home from school, you should **feel empowered to speak** with your direct manager about the issues impacting you right now. We're all in this together.

A SOURCE YOU CAN TRUST

This resource was put together using expert guidance from 98point6's board-certified physicians, as well as the OSHA resource Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 and the CDC's Keeping the Workplace Safe.

¹ Forbes. "The Mental Health Crisis Generated By COVID-19: Why It's Critical And How You Can Retain Your Sanity." April 14, 2020. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2020/04/14/the-mental-health-crisis-generated-by-covid-19-why-its-critical-and-how-you-can-retain-your-sanity/#5a122c056c35>