
FACT SHEET

Screening for COVID-19

Screening for COVID-19 is a way to detect the virus in people who may not be showing any symptoms. Identification of people who may be infected allows them to stay away from others to decrease the spread of the virus. Screening for COVID-19 involves asking questions related to symptoms of COVID-19 and checking the temperature. The CDC recommends that employers implement questions and temperature checks, and these screening measures are required for employees who are doing in-person work at business locations in the Commonwealth of PA (Littler Mendelson, 2020).

Screening questions that are recommended by the CDC and the American Medical Association are:

- Have you or anyone who lives with you had any of the following symptoms in the last 48 hours:
 - fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
 - cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - body aches
 - loss of taste or smell
 - sore throat

- In the last 14 days, have you been in close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, someone who is being tested for COVID-19, or who has symptoms of COVID-19? Close contact is defined by the CDC as “within 6 feet of a person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period” (CDC Appendices, 2020).

(American Medical Association, 2020) (CDC Facilities, 2020)

Temperature Screening:

- One method to measure an individual's temperature is to use a "non-contact" infrared thermometer; using other temperature assessment devices, such as oral thermometers, may increase the risk of infection.
 - Record results of temperature screening. The guidelines issued by the Commonwealth of PA are to send any employee home who has a temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher.
 - Limitations of non-contact temperature assessment devices:
 - Not effective as the only means of detecting an infection due to the following factors:
 - ✓ Fevers without infection
 - ✓ Use of fever reduction drugs
 - ✓ Other infections or conditions that may cause an increased temperature
 - ✓ Failure to follow manufacturer's instructions for use.
 - Temperature measurements can be affected by several factors:
 - ✓ Clothing
 - ✓ Testing location and device preparation
 - ✓ Training of person using the device
 - ✓ Environmental factors such as room temperature and humidity
- (FDA, 2020)

References:

American Medical Association. (2020, May 15). *Use this COVID-19 screening script when reopening your practice*. <https://www.ama-assn.org/practice-management/sustainability/use-COVID-19-screening-script-when-reopening-your-practice>.

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CDC Facilities COVID-19 Screening. (2020, November 12). <https://www.cdc.gov/screening/>.

FDA. (2020). *Non-contact Temperature Assessment Devices During COVID-19*. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/coronavirus-COVID-19-and-medical-devices/non-contact-temperature-assessment-devices-during-COVID-19-pandemic>.

Littler Mendelson. (2020, November 30). This Won't Hurt a Bit: Employee Temperature and Health Screenings – A List of Statewide Orders. Littler Mendelson P.C. <https://www.littler.com/publication-press/publication/wont-hurt-bit-employee-temperature-and-health-screenings-list>.