



Lifespan

Delivering health with care.®

Employee FAQs

With the continued global and local spread of COVID-19, we understand that many of you have questions and concerns, ranging from queries about the new Lifespan travel policies to when to contact Employee Health (EOHS) about symptoms. Whatever your concern, we are committed to getting you thorough and timely answers, so that you feel informed, safe, and prepared to do your job in the weeks and months ahead.

Here are some of the most common questions we are getting, with answers below. We will update this list weekly. [Use this form to submit your own question](#). You must be connected to the intranet to submit.

Q. Is there a protocol/process to follow for a Lifespan employee who may have been exposed domestically? Not through travel, but perhaps through a family member who has a co-worker who may have been exposed/is showing symptoms? Should the employee report to employee health, call employee health, notify their supervisor?

A. If you are concerned about domestic exposure through a family member or friend--who is not a confirmed case--but you have no symptoms, your family member has no symptoms, and you do not fit the travel screening guidelines, you do not need to report to Employee Health. You can call the Department of Health hotline at 401-222-8022 (Mon-Fri 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) with questions, or call your own primary care provider. **If you develop symptoms** (fever, cold or flu-like). you should stay home, alert your supervisor and call employee health at these numbers:

RI Hospital –RIH/ LCS/ GHI/ LPG	444-4038
The Miriam Hospital --TMH/LPG	793-3126
Bradley Hospital--BH/LSS/LPG	432-1539
Newport Hospital—NH/LPG	845-1245

Q. If I don't feel well and I stay home from work, or if I leave work because I do not feel well, will I be subject to disciplinary action?

A. It is essential that we ensure the safety of our employees and our patients. If you have respiratory or GI symptoms, a cough, or a fever, **stay home**. **If you are at work and start to feel these symptoms, alert**

your manager, go home, and contact Employee Health to be evaluated. While Lifespan will generally apply its attendance policies for employees who must miss work due to illness, based on the nature of the current circumstances, exceptions to those policies may be made on a case-by-case basis. Most important is that employees who exhibit these symptoms take the time they need at home to get well; they should not come to, or remain at, work while they have these symptoms and are potentially infectious.

Q. I will be traveling domestically for a leisure trip. Do I have to contact Employee Health before returning to work?

A. At this time, the Lifespan travel policy does not require assessment and/or self-quarantine after domestic travel. **However, if you have symptoms** or concerns after returning from a trip, you should not return to work and contact your primary care provider by phone. Screening guidelines are changing rapidly, so please check back at the time of your travel.

Q. With regards to the Lifespan travel policy, would Canada be considered international?

A. Yes, the travel policy does apply to all international travel, including Canada. The policy prohibits professional international travel; and discourages personal/leisure international travel. If you do make a personal international trip, you must contact Employee and Occupational Health Services (EOHS) by phone upon your return. EOHS staff will then complete a phone screening to determine whether you may return to work at a Lifespan facility or program, or whether you must remain home for 14 days, based on the most recent CDC and DOH guidance and prevalence of confirmed cases where the travel occurred.

Q. Is there a cleaning protocol being instituted that includes off-site locations?

A. Yes, property management has been in contact with Infection Control to ensure appropriate cleaning supplies and protocols are being used at all sites.

Q. I facilitate a monthly support group of 25 members that is open to the community. We meet on the hospital campus. Should I still hold the group?

A. Support groups that are held on our hospital campuses are temporarily canceled.

Q. Do we have cases of COVID-19 in Lifespan hospitals?

A. The Department of Health is handling all communication about confirmed cases in Rhode Island. To respect the privacy of patients, the DOH and our hospitals will not disclose the location of potential cases that may arise. Please be reminded that HIPAA patient privacy laws prohibit employees from sharing any patient information beyond the scope of caring for the patient.

Q. Am I at risk as a health care provider or hospital staff member?

A. Throughout the course of our planning, the safety of our staff and patients has been paramount. We have significantly restricted visitation, established protocols to screen patients at entry points for travel history and symptoms, and provided barrier masks to those with respiratory symptoms, minimizing the chances of droplet contact.

We have implemented measures to train employees on personal protective equipment for situations where it is most appropriate and needed, and we have been working proactively to ensure that we have an adequate supply of PPE to protect our staff in the weeks and months to come. It is safe to come to work.

Q. What precautions can I as an individual take at work?

A. Hand hygiene is always a top priority in hospital infection control, and this is no different. Our best defense against community transmission of this virus is frequent hand hygiene with use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or thorough handwashing with soap and water. It cannot be emphasized enough how important this is, along with social distancing in public areas, coughing or sneezing into your elbow and avoiding touching your face.

If an isolation precaution sign is posted outside a patient's room, please read the sign to determine what personal protective equipment is needed to enter. If you feel sick, especially if you have respiratory or GI symptoms, or fever, stay home. If you are at work and you start to feel these symptoms, alert your manager, go home and contact Employee Health to be evaluated.

Q. What can I do to assure my patients, and my friends and family outside of work?

A. Keep a sense of calm. As a medical professional, or even as a non-clinical employee of a health care system, your patients, friends and family undoubtedly turn to you as a source of accurate information and advice. You are in many ways an ambassador to the community, and in times of uncertainty there is bound to be misinformation circulating that can leave people panicked or ill at ease. It is our hope that the information provided in ongoing staff communications will help you to support your family and friends.

There are things that you can do to plan for your own family, including making arrangements in case of school closures, ensuring that the older adults in your care are monitored and able to stay out of crowded public spaces as much as possible, and ensuring that you have adequate food, medicine and other necessities should your family need to self-quarantine at home for 2-3 weeks.

Remember that as a Lifespan employee, you have access to emergency child, elder and even pet care for as many as 10 days per calendar year, through Bright Horizon's Back-Up Care program. The co-pay can be as little as \$15 per child each day. You must register in advance to be able to use these services, which are provided as part of your Lifespan benefits: <https://backup.brighthorizons.com>.