Working at Cornell

Medical Accommodations

All employees are expected to be available to perform the essential functions of their roles. Consistent with current policies and to the extent possible, the university, and its representatives, will provide assistance to those who have medical or personal concerns. No staff member should be compelled to return to campus to do work that can be accomplished remotely. If work cannot be done remotely, supervisors should contact their local HR representative and consider the avenues noted below.

Typically, qualifying employees pursue an accommodation to help them address their concerns related to returning to work. For some employees with underlying health conditions, a supervisor may have concerns regarding their employees health and safety if they return. Supervisors may not prevent employees from returning to work based solely on the supervisor’s belief that the employee falls into the CDC’s categories of individuals at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19. For guidance on the ADA Reasonable Accommodation process and other support mechanisms available to employees, please see Disability Accommodations.

Accommodation Due to Medical Conditions

Faculty and staff who are asked to return to work on-site who have an underlying medical condition, or those who are pregnant, may submit an ADA Reasonable Accommodation request, including accommodation requests for PPE, related to returning to the workplace by contacting Medical Leaves Administration at wcds@cornell.edu or calling 607-255-1177. More information and forms are available at: https://hr.cornell.edu/benefits-pay/leaves-disability/disability-accommodations.

If an employee is unable to wear a required face covering due to medical, religious or other protected reason, they can follow the appropriate process for requesting an ADA reasonable accommodation or a religious accommodation (University Policy 6.13.8, Religious Accommodation).

Refer to CDC guidance for the list of People Who Are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness.

Employees Caring for Family Members

Employees who regularly care for a family member who is at higher risk for severe complications from COVID-19 may be able to work remotely or may be eligible for time off under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Further, staff members may be covered by NYS Paid Family Leave. More information on various leave programs is available here or by contacting Medical Leaves Administration at 607-255-1177 to determine the appropriate leave for an employee’s situation and needs.

Voluntary Reduction in Hours

An employee may request a voluntary short-term reduction in hours (appointment) to help them meet their personal needs.

Staff Time Off: If a staff member is not available, or not willing, to work as required, they may use their leave accrual balances in accordance with standard vacation and HAP policies after consultation with their supervisor. A staff member may also request an unpaid leave as permitted by policy/contract if:

- the employee does not qualify for a workplace accommodation
- the situation doesn’t qualify for an approved paid leave
- a remote work arrangement is not feasible

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**N95 Voluntary Use Program**

Employees who do not meet the requirements for a medical accommodation and/or don’t have any workplace exposure that warrants wearing of a N95 respirator may participate in the EHS voluntary use program after completing the required training. Participation requires the employee to provide their own N95 respirator. Contact askehs@cornell.edu for more information.