

Recommendations for the protection of risk groups of employees against COVID-19 (coronavirus) at BUT

According to the current knowledge about the course of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) disease, the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic has identified the following risk factors that can lead to a very serious course of the disease and even the death of patients:

1. The age of 65 years and over with associated chronic diseases.
2. Chronic lung disease (includes moderate and severe bronchial asthma) with long-term systemic pharmacological treatment.
3. Diseases of the heart and / or large vessels with long-term systemic pharmacological treatment, e.g. hypertension.
4. Disorder of the immune system, e.g.
 - a) during immunosuppressive treatment (steroids, HIV, etc.),
 - b) in anticancer treatment,
 - c) after transplantation of solid organs and / or bone marrow.
5. Severe obesity (BMI over 40 kg / m²).
6. Pharmacologically treated diabetes mellitus.
7. Chronic kidney disease requiring temporary or permanent support / replacement of kidney function (dialysis).
8. Liver disease (primary or secondary).

With regard to the above, the risk group includes a BUT employee who personally fulfils at least one of the points listed above or if any of the points is fulfilled by any person living in the same household with him.

According to the valid legal regulations, the employer does not have the right to the information about the employee's health, if these do not relate to the work performed by the employee (the employer has the right only to the information about the employee's medical fitness for work, which is checked during preventive examinations of employees). In the current situation, it is not possible to assume that an employee who belongs to the risk group of employees according to the above criteria does not automatically have medical fitness for work, which would have to be established by an assessment of medical fitness for work issued by the occupational health service provider. The situation is difficult for the employer, because the health of employees should be protected even without relevant information.

It is therefore recommended to acquaint all BUT employees (e.g. at meetings within workplaces) in a suitable form with risk factors that can lead to a very serious course of COVID-19 and to the death from this disease and ask them to report their superior that he/she belongs to the risk group. Appropriate arrangements of their working duties should be proposed for such staff so that, as far as possible, they do not come into contact with a large number of other persons, in particular students, in the course of their work. If such contacts cannot be excluded, such contacts must at least be limited and the following measures maintained:

- Keeping the distance from others using the appropriate adjustments to workplaces or through measures in auditoriums
- Use of respiratory protective equipment (means to prevent the spread of droplets)
- Carrying out disinfection in workplaces

Due to the absence of legislation applicable to such cases, especially after the end of an emergency, it is necessary to be very sensitive so that the employer's measures are not considered discriminatory on the grounds of age or medical condition, however motivated solely by concerns about employees' health and life.