Employee Protocols for COVID-19 Cases and Exposures
Revised: 01 Sept 2022

Guiding Principles

- **Any employee who works on campus as part of their role** must promptly notify Occupational Health should they develop COVID symptoms, be told they need to self-isolate, or test positive for COVID on a rapid test or PCR.
  
  - **Please include in your email:**
    - The date that your symptoms or self-isolation started
    - The last day that you were on campus
    - If there is a known contact with someone who has COVID symptoms or recent travel
  
- University of Waterloo Occupational Health (OH) can be reached at 519-888-4567 extensions 41388 and 40879 or at occupationalhealth@uwaterloo.ca.

- Occupational Health will help employees with contact tracing for the time they were on campus. Personal contact tracing is the responsibility of the employee.

- Any employee who travels outside of Canada MUST follow guidance provided by border services. If they are asked to do a PCR test at the border, they must self-isolate until the test results are received. Please see up to date guidelines here [https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid).

General Terms

**Fully Vaccinated:** an individual ≥14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series. The Vaccine must be approved for use in Canada.

**Rapid Antigen Screening:** A test that helps identify individuals both symptomatic and asymptomatic, who may be infected with COVID. Test results are available within the hour. In most situations, a positive rapid test should be taken as valid and do not need to be confirmed with a PCR test or reported to public health.
**PCR test:** A swab that is placed in the nose through to the back of the throat to test for COVID-19. It is only available through testing centers and will take 1-4 days to get results. At this time, it is only available to those in the highest risk settings and most staff will not qualify for this type of testing. These can be found at the end of this document.

**COVID-19 Symptoms**

Individuals with any of these symptoms below should self-isolate and stay at home until fever is resolved AND their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms)

**One or more** of the following symptoms:

- **Fever and/or chills**
- **Cough** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- **Shortness of breath** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., chronic heart failure, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- **Decrease or loss of smell or taste** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., nasal polyps, allergies, neurological disorders)

**Two or more** of the following symptoms:

- **Extreme fatigue** (general feeling of being unwell, lack of energy, extreme tiredness) - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction, anemia, malignancy, receiving a COVID-19 or flu vaccine in the past 48 hours)
- **Muscle aches or joint pain** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, receiving a COVID-19 or flu vaccine in the past 48 hours)
- **Gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e., nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea)** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., transient vomiting due to anxiety in children, chronic vestibular dysfunction, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, side effect of medication)
• **Sore throat (painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing)** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., post-nasal drip, gastroesophageal reflux)

• **Runny nose or nasal congestion** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., returning inside from the cold, chronic sinusitis unchanged from baseline, seasonal allergies)

• **Headache** - Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., tension-type headaches, chronic migraines, receiving a COVID-19 or flu vaccine in the last 48 hours)

*Other symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19 include abdominal pain, conjunctivitis (pink eye) or decreased or lack of appetite for young children*

### Isolation Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Isolation period</th>
<th>Additional precautions after self-isolation period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals with severe illness (requiring ICU level of care)</td>
<td><strong>At least 20 days</strong> (or at discretion of hospital IPAC) after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset (whichever is earlier/applicable) and until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and no fever present.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals who:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• residing in a highest risk setting</td>
<td><strong>At least 10 days</strong> after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset (whichever is earlier/applicable) and until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and no fever present.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• hospitalized for COVID19 related illness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• not requiring ICU level of care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• immunocompromised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All other individuals not listed above who have COVID-19 symptoms</strong></td>
<td>Until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms) and no fever present.</td>
<td>For a total of 10 days after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**OR**

**A positive COVID-19 test (PCR, rapid molecular or rapid antigen test)**

Asymptomatic individuals with a positive test result do not need to self-isolate unless symptoms develop. If symptoms develop, they should self-isolate immediately

(whichever is earlier/applicable), individuals **should:**

- Continue to wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including schools and childcare, unless under 2 years old)

- Avoid non-essential activities where mask removal is necessary (e.g., dining out, playing a wind instrument, high contact sports where masks cannot be safely worn)

- Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (e.g., seniors)

- Avoid non-essential visits to highest risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes
Use of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT)

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms who use rapid antigen tests should be aware that they may produce false negative results, particularly early in COVID-19 infection. Repeat testing at least 24 hours after an initial negative test improves confidence in a negative test result.

There is no provincial public health requirement for workers who are test-positive cases or isolated due to COVID-19 symptoms to provide proof of a negative test result or a positive serological test result to their employers in order to return to work. It is expected that workers who have tested positive or who have symptoms of COVID-19 follow public health isolation recommendations.

Close Contacts

You were in close proximity (less than 2 meters) to a case for at least 15 minutes or for multiple short periods of time without measures such as masking, distancing, and/or use of personal protective equipment depending on the nature of contact.

Household and Non-Household Contacts

For a total of 10 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 positive case or individual with COVID-19 symptoms, the individual notified by a case should:

1. Self-monitor for symptoms. Self-isolate immediately if they develop any symptom of COVID-19 and seek testing if eligible.

2. Wear a well fitted mask in all public settings:
   - Individuals should maintain masking as much as possible in public settings (including school and child care, unless under 2 years old). Reasonable exceptions would include removal for essential activities like eating, while maintaining as much distancing as possible.
   - Participation in activities where masking can be maintained throughout may be resumed, but individuals should avoid activities where mask removal would be necessary (e.g., dining out; playing a wind instrument; high contact sports where masks cannot be safely worn).
• Individuals who are unable to mask (e.g., children under two years of age, etc.) may return to public settings without masking.

3. Avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (e.g., seniors).

4. Avoid non-essential visits to highest risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes. Where essential visit cannot be avoided, close contacts should wear a medical mask, maintain physical distancing, and notify the highest risk setting of their recent exposure.

Please contact Occupational Health should you have any questions or concerns.