

# Protocol for Addressing Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Exposures

## *Evolving Guidance – Subject to Change*

*As the pandemic progresses, public health recommendations to protect the community will also evolve. Accordingly, University departments should be prepared to adapt to changing guidance.*

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to identify procedures so that University departments can address confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 as operations resume.

This protocol applies to University persons who have (any of the following):

- (1) tested positive for COVID-19
- (2) COVID-19-related symptoms but have not been tested or have tested negative
- (3) been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person and are currently asymptomatic, or
- (4) recently traveled

## Courses of Action for COVID-19 Positives, Symptoms and Exposures

There are four scenarios of confirmed, suspected, or increased risk for UChicago community members. Any UChicago community member covered under one of these scenarios must promptly self-report at [C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu](mailto:C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu). These scenarios involve individuals that have (any of the following):

- (1) tested positive for COVID-19
- (2) COVID-19-related symptoms but have not been tested or have tested negative
- (3) been exposed to a COVID-19 positive person and are currently asymptomatic, or
- (4) recently traveled (NOTE: Reporting to [C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu](mailto:C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu) is not required, however, you must not return to in-person activities until the appropriate criteria are met)

Since COVID-19 is transmitted from person to person through contact with respiratory droplets or bodily fluids, it is vital to ensure infected individuals are identified and self-isolate until they are no longer infectious. The following protocol is recommended in the event departments become aware of any individual matching the scenarios:

<p><b>COVID-19 Scenario</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Must Not Return to In-person Activities Until the Following Criteria are Met Based on <a href="#">CDC</a> guidance*</b></p> <p align="center"><b>Important Note: To calculate isolation and quarantine period, day 0 is the first day of COVID-19-related symptoms, date the positive test was taken if asymptomatic, or day of exposure to someone with COVID-19. Day 1 is the first full day after.</b></p>
<p><u>Scenario 1:</u> Individuals who <b>have tested positive</b> for COVID-19 (Isolate)</p>	<p><b>Individuals can return to in-person activities after:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. At least 5 days have passed since date of the positive test was taken if asymptomatic; <b>or</b></li> <li>B. At least 5 days have passed since COVID-19-related symptoms first appeared or the day the positive test was taken; <b>and</b></li> <li>C. The individual is without a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication; <b>and</b></li> <li>D. Other COVID-19-related symptoms have resolved (with the exception of loss of taste and smell).</li> </ul> <p>After isolation has ended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E. After the isolation has ended, the individual continues to wear a face covering at all times when around others (and as otherwise required)for an additional 5 days (through day 10); <b>or</b></li> <li>F. If the individual has access to a rapid/antigen test, with two sequential negative tests 48 hours apart, the individual may remove mask sooner than day 10 (unless otherwise required). If the test is positive, the individual should continue to wear a mask and wait 48 hours before taking another test, continue to take another test at least 48 hours apart until the individual has two sequential negative results. This may mean the individual will need to continue wearing a masking and testing beyond day 10.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Scenario 2:</u> Individuals who <b>suspect they may have COVID-19 due to exhibiting COVID-19-related symptoms</b> (Isolate)</p>	<p>The individual should self-isolate get a COVID-19 test, if possible. If the individual tests positive, the individual cannot return to in-person activities until the criteria in Scenario 1 are met as applicable.</p> <p>If COVID-19-related symptoms are no longer present and the individual has received a negative test result, the individual may be permitted to return to in-person activities. (Note: A negative test result by itself is not sufficient for an individual to resume in-person activities if an individual continues to exhibit COVID-19-related symptoms, or symptoms that are new and unusual or out of character for their body.) If you are symptomatic and receive a negative result from antigen/rapid test (including at-home tests), you should still also take a PCR test, which has a lower chance of giving false negative results. It is possible for a symptomatic individual to receive a negative antigen/rapid test result and subsequently test positive with a PCR test days later.</p> <p>If the individual is unable to be tested, the individual cannot return to in-person activities until:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. At least 5 days have passed since COVID-19-related symptoms first appeared; <b>and</b></li> <li>B. The individual is without a fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication; <b>and</b></li> <li>C. Other COVID-19-related symptoms have resolved (with the exception of loss of taste and smell); <b>and</b></li> <li>D. The individual continues to wear a face covering around others at home and in public (and as otherwise required) for an additional 5 days.</li> <li>E. If the individual’s COVID-19-related symptoms are not resolved after 5 days, the individual should continue to isolate until day 10.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Scenario 3:</u> Individuals who have been informed by the University, and/or a medical or public health entity or have reason to believe that they <b>had close contact with a COVID-19 positive person</b> (Wear a Mask)</p>	<p><b>Regardless of vaccination status:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Individuals <u>are not required to quarantine</u> after an exposure, but must wear a face covering around others for 10 days from the date of the last contact with someone with COVID-19 (day 1 is the first full day after last contact with a person who has had COVID-19); <b>and</b></li> <li>B. Get tested at least 5 days after last close contact with someone with COVID-19.</li> <li>C. If the individual tests positive or develops COVID-19-related symptoms, the individual cannot return to in-person activities until the criteria in Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 is met as applicable.</li> </ul> <p>Please note the following exceptions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>D. Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the previous 30 days and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again if they do not develop new symptoms. These individuals should wear a well-fitting face covering around others for 10 days from the date of the last contact with someone with COVID-19.</li> <li>E. Individuals who develop symptoms again within 30 days of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Scenario 4:</u> Individuals who <b>have recently traveled</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The individual has followed the recommendation of <a href="#">City of Chicago’s Department of Public Health Travel Guidance</a> and the <a href="#">CDC’s Travel Assessment</a> depending on the state or country from which they are travelling from and other health factors, <b>or</b></li> <li>B. If during the time of quarantine, the individual develops COVID-19-related symptoms, the individual cannot return to in-person activities until the criteria in Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 has been met as applicable.</li> </ul>

*\*Note, the guidance and recommendations for positives cases, COVID-19-related symptoms, and exposures for: individuals living in on campus housing due to the congregate setting; individuals in pre-kindergarten/nursery through 12 grade school settings; or individuals who were moderately or severely ill with COVID-19 or have a weakened immune system (immunocompromised) may differ slightly.*

By adhering to the above protocol, any individual that is confirmed to have COVID-19, and/or is exhibiting any type of COVID-19 related symptom will avoid all in-person activities. Please also keep the following in mind:

- Travel is not permitted during 5-day isolation or quarantine period and should be avoided until the full 10 days after the first day of testing positive, COVID-19-related symptoms, or exposures.
- Individuals should be cautious around those who are immunocompromised, at a high risk for severe disease, and other high-risk settings until at least 10 days after testing positives, COVID-19-related symptoms, or exposures.
- Adherence to the public health precautions, including wearing face coverings, and frequent cleaning of hands and high-touch areas serve to limit the transmission and may eliminate the need for any additional disinfecting in areas where an infectious individual may have been on-campus.

Department heads must inform their personnel of these protocols, including the expectation to report cases covered by the above scenarios to [C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu](mailto:C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu). This will enable the University to take the appropriate course of action to potentially include notifying the Chicago Department of Public Health, conducting contact tracing, and/or determining whether additional cleaning or disinfecting is necessary.

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing

All reports of a UChicago community member being exposed to COVID-19 or having tested positive made to [C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu](mailto:C19HealthReport@uchicago.edu) will be forwarded to the University's Contact Tracing Team.

A Contact Tracer will be assigned to interview each individual with confirmed COVID-19 to determine if they have been in close contact with other members of the University community.

A close contact is defined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Chicago Department of Public Health as any individual who has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

The Team will assign a Contact Tracer to each case. The Contact Tracer will coordinate with the person who has a confirmed case to determine transmission timelines and pathways and provide recommendations to limit further spread of the virus. As part of this coordination, the Contact Tracer will interview each individual with confirmed COVID-19 to determine if they have been in close contact with other members of the University community. The Contact Tracer will notify close University contacts of their exposure, provide them with public health recommendations to limit the spread of the virus, and direct them to University resources for further support.

The Contact Tracing Team routinely notifies the appropriate dean of students, academic leader, work supervisor, or other appropriate medical personnel concerning new cases. A top priority in any such notification is to maintain the confidentiality of infected individuals, and to limit information about a patient's identity to a small number of University personnel with oversight duties for the patient. Contact tracers focus on individual notifications of known close contacts; they typically do not send broad messages to a group when the individual exposures are unknown. Only people whose exposure to an infected individual meets appropriate risk thresholds will be contacted. The University's primary

means of providing updates on new cases is the campus-wide dashboard. In limited cases when communications are sent about specific new cases, such messages should always avoid providing identifying information about the COVID-19 patient.