

Protocols for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or have exposure to an individual with COVID-19

August 28, 2020

To the campus community:

This email outlines the protocols for individuals who test positive for COVID-19 or have exposure to an individual with COVID-19. We understand this email is lengthy, but it contains important information. **Please read it carefully, save it, and refer back to this email as needed.**

As we have reinforced in many communications over the last several months, the University is taking a layered multi-step approach to our safety and hygiene protocols and other institutional practices in order to significantly reduce the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. These steps must each be followed in their entirety in order to obtain the desired result. Please refer to the [University's Safe Return-to-Campus Plan](#) guidebook where these steps are summarized more completely.

This email addresses the following subjects:

1. What happens to an individual if they test positive for COVID-19?
2. What happens if a person is/was severely ill with COVID-19 or has a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication? When can that person be around others?
3. What happens to an individual if they had close contact in the last 14 days with a person who is symptomatic or diagnosed with COVID-19?
4. What is the definition of "close contact"?
5. What's the difference between quarantine and isolation?
6. Scenarios/examples

1. What happens to an individual if they test positive for COVID-19?

All members of the campus community (students and employees) who test positive for COVID-19 -- regardless of whether they have symptoms and regardless of whether they are regularly on campus -- **must immediately notify the University's Assistant Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs/Dean of Students (AVP/DOS) by completing the [COVID-19 Report Form](#)**. The AVP/DOS is the University's designated liaison to the Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD). Completing the form will allow the University to begin efforts to assist you, and to help contain the spread of the disease.

If you have COVID-19, do not notify anyone else on campus (e.g., supervisor, instructor) of your diagnosis. You need only inform them of your absence from work, class, etc.

Similarly, members of the University community should not share information about other individuals' health conditions with other people. Health information is private. **Contact tracing and the resulting notifications are managed exclusively by the WCHD with assistance, when requested, from trained EMU personnel.**

The protocols below outline the additional steps that an individual who tests positive for COVID-19 may be required to follow, depending on whether they have symptoms of COVID-19. As a reminder, the symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

A. Tests positive with symptoms

An individual who tests positive for COVID-19 and has symptoms (outlined above) must self-isolate (see Section #5 below for the definition of “isolate”) and can be with others only after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
- 24 hours with no fever (without taking fever-reducing medications) AND
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (e.g. cough, shortness of breath)**

***Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.*

Most people do not require additional testing to determine when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends further testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your results.

B. Tests positive without symptoms

An individual who tests positive for COVID-19 and does not have symptoms (outlined above) must self-isolate (see Section #5 below for the definition of “isolate”). If the individual continues to have no symptoms, they can be with others after ten (10) days have passed since the initial positive test.

If the individual develops symptoms after testing positive, the individual must follow the guidance under subsection (A) above.

Most people do not require additional testing to decide when they can be around others; however, if your healthcare provider recommends further testing, they will let you know when you can resume being around others based on your results.

2. What happens if a person is/was severely ill with COVID-19 or has a severely weakened immune system (immunocompromised) due to a health condition or medication? When can that person be around others?

Individuals who are severely ill with COVID-19 might need to stay home longer than 10 days and up to 20 days after symptoms first appeared. Persons who are severely immunocompromised may require testing to determine when they can be around others. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information and to determine whether further testing is recommended. Your healthcare provider will let you know if and when you can resume being around other people based on the results of your testing.

3. What happens to an individual if they had close contact in the last 14 days with a person who is symptomatic or diagnosed with COVID-19?

Subject to the exceptions below, an individual who has had close contact (see Section #4 below for the definition of “close contact”) with someone with COVID-19 should:

- stay home and self-quarantine (see Section #5 below for the definition of “quarantine”) for 14 days after their last exposure to that person, AND
- [complete the COVID-19 Report Form](#).

Exceptions: If you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19, you do not need to self-quarantine for 14 days if all of the following apply:

- you were diagnosed with COVID-19 within the previous 3 months, AND
- you recovered, AND
- you remain without COVID-19 symptoms (as listed above)

Please note that individuals will be notified through the contact tracing process if they are believed to have had close contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Individuals often believe that they have had close contact with someone when, in fact, they have not. If you learn that someone with whom you have had some contact has been diagnosed with COVID-19, but you have not been contacted through the contact tracing process, you should simply self-monitor for symptoms (e.g., take your temperature twice a day), but you may be around other people subject to following all health protocols (e.g., wearing a face covering and physical distancing).

4. What is the definition of “close contact”?

You have had “close contact” with a person if any of the following apply:

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes.
- You provided care to someone who was sick with COVID-19.
- You had direct physical contact with a person who has COVID-19 (touched, hugged, or kissed them).
- You shared eating or drinking utensils with a person who has COVID-19.
- A person with COVID-19 sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.

5. What’s the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Isolation separates people who are infected with COVID-19 away from people who are not infected. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be subject to isolation and will receive instructions from their health care provider, the County Health Department, and/or University offices (e.g., Housing) as applicable.

Quarantine, on the other hand, keeps someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from other people. Quarantine applies to anyone who has been in “close contact” (as defined in Section #4, above) with someone who has COVID-19 (with the exception as stated in #3 above).

Individuals who are subjected to quarantine must do all of the following:

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19;
- Watch for fever (100.4 F), cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19 (symptoms are listed in Section #1, above); and

- if possible, stay away from other people, especially people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19.

NOTE: Even if you test negative for COVID-19 or feel healthy, you should stay home (quarantine) since symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

6. Scenarios and examples.

We understand this contains a great deal of information. We are therefore including examples to illustrate how these protocols apply.

Example #1: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 – no further close contact expected.

Scenario: “I had close contact with a person who has COVID-19. I do not expect to have further close contact or any physical interactions with the infected individual. I have not previously contracted COVID-19.”

Answer: You must self-quarantine for 14 days. Your last day of quarantine is 14 days from the date you had close contact with the infected individual. Please note that if your quarantine starts at noon on day 1, then it would end at noon on the last day.

Example #2: Close contact with someone who has COVID-19 – live with the person but can avoid further close contact.

Scenario: “I live with someone who has COVID-19 (e.g. roommate, partner, family member), and the infected person has isolated by staying in a separate bedroom. I have not had any close contact with the infected person since they began their isolation.”

Answer: You must self-quarantine for 14 days from when the infected person began home isolation.

Example #3: Individual is under quarantine and had additional close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

Scenario: “I live with someone who has COVID-19 and started their 14-day quarantine period because they had close contact. Unfortunately, I had additional close contact with the infected person during the 14-day quarantine period.” (Alternatively, “another member of my household contracted COVID-19 during my 14-day self-quarantine.”) Must I restart my quarantine?

Answer: Yes. You must restart your 14-day quarantine from the last day you had close contact with anyone in your house who has COVID-19. Any time a new household member is diagnosed with COVID-19 and you have had close contact with them, you will need to restart your quarantine.

Example #4: Live with someone who has COVID-19 and cannot avoid continued close contact.

Scenario: “I live in a household where I cannot avoid close contact with the person who has COVID-19. I am providing direct care to the person who is sick, do not have a separate bedroom to isolate the person who is sick, or live in close quarters where I am unable to keep physical distance of 6 feet.”

Answer: You should avoid contact with others outside the home while the person is sick, and quarantine for 14 days after the person who has COVID-19 meets the criteria to end home isolation.

Resource: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>