COVID-19 GUIDELINES for Self-Isolating and Testing
University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine

It is important to follow current government guidance:

General Covid Enquiries:
Stay Safe Cambridge University website:
Or University Covid Helpdesk: phone 01223 339514
email covid-helpdesk@admin.cam.ac.uk

ASYMPTOMATIC TESTING:
Students on placement at Addenbrooke’s and at regional hospitals are offered this as part of staff screening and we consider it essential that you take part in this.
If on regional placement, you should take part in the screening offered where you are based.

Details of the University Asymptomatic Screening programme are available here:

A PCR test is more accurate than a Lateral Flow Device (LFD) test. In the rare situation where an asymptomatic student has a positive LFD test and subsequent negative PCR test, the student would usually be able to return to placement providing they remain asymptomatic. However, you should contact OH in this situation to discuss the circumstances and risk.

CRITERIA FOR SELF-ISOLATION:

i) Symptoms
You must get a PCR test (rather than a LFD) as soon as possible and self-isolate if you have one or more of the three key symptoms of:
- High temp >37.8 or feeling feverish.
- New intermittent or persistent cough or worsening of usual cough.
- Loss or change in sense of taste or smell, particularly in the absence of nasal congestion.

ii) Close Contact
With someone who has one or more of the three key symptoms above, or someone who has tested positive. This includes if you are traced as a contact of someone who has tested positive.
The time period for contact is from 48 hours before their symptoms developed until 10 days after their symptoms developed.
“Close contact” is contact for any time within 1 metre; at least 15 minutes within 2 metres; or sharing a car, UNLESS appropriate PPE was being worn.

If you are fully vaccinated, then you may not need to self-isolate after contact with a confirmed case if certain criteria are met. See section below on “Return to Placement after Contact with a Confirmed Positive Case”. Note that these criteria (which follow PHE and OH advice) are more stringent for healthcare staff than the advice given to the general public.

iii) Positive test

**IF SYMPTOMATIC:** Covid-19 self-reporting via MedEd:  
[https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/student-covid-reporting/](https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/student-covid-reporting/)

Self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms.

Get tested (see below) – likely to be able to return to placement sooner than 10 days with a negative PCR test, providing well enough to do so.

If pyrexia persists beyond 10 days, seek medical advice (cough and change of smell may well persist beyond 10 days).

**Positive Test but Asymptomatic**  
Self-isolate for 10 days from positive test.  
If become symptomatic, restart 10 days self-isolation from date symptoms began.  
Note you may be able to self-isolate for 7 rather than 10 days if specific criteria are met. See section below “Returning to Placement after a Positive Result”.

**Positive Test and Symptoms Worsen**  
Contact [https://111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) for medical advice, or phone 111.  
Don’t attend GP or A&E or pharmacy, unless instructed to do so.

**Negative Test and Symptoms Worsen**  
It is important to remain vigilant for other infectious diseases, including meningitis.

**Household Member Symptomatic**  
Symptomatic member gets tested (PCR) and self-isolates for 10 days from onset of symptoms. See:  

Household contacts self-isolate for 10 days from date index case became ill, unless index case is tested and is negative.
If household contacts become symptomatic, they self-isolate for 10 days and get tested (PCR). An asymptomatic contact can stop self-isolating if the index case tests negative on a PCR test.

**Secondary contact with a case**

If you have contact with an asymptomatic person who has had contact with a known case, then you are a secondary contact and don’t need to self-isolate providing both you and the primary contact are asymptomatic. You should remain vigilant for symptoms. The primary contact should self-isolate in the usual way. If either you or the primary contact becomes symptomatic then you should self-isolate, and of course any symptomatic student should be tested.

Examples of this scenario would be sharing a car with someone who has had contact with a known case, or a housemate who has had contact with a known case.

**SYMPTOMATIC TESTING: (PCR swab test)**

a) **TYPICAL COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

Testing is important for symptomatic students with one or more of:
- High temp >37.8 or feeling feverish
- New intermittent or persistent cough or worsening of usual cough
- Loss or change in sense of taste or smell, particularly in the absence of nasal congestion.

If a household member gets these symptoms, they must get tested and the whole household should self-isolate whilst the result is awaited.

b) **NON-SPECIFIC VIRAL SYMPTOMS**

If you have the following “viral symptoms” without the key Covid symptoms, then you must submit your next asymptomatic swab as soon as possible, even if it has been done in the last few days:
- Sore throat
- Nasal discharge or congestion
- Muscle aches
- New hoarseness
- New shortness of breath
- New wheeze

It is not necessary to wait for the result of this swab unless instructed to do so for another reason. If you are not registered with the asymptomatic programme but require a swab for this reason, then arrange it via [https://cuhstaffportal.co.uk/testrequest/](https://cuhstaffportal.co.uk/testrequest/) and then register with the asymptomatic programme.
Cambridge Placement
Covid test is booked online via the staff web portal https://cuhstaffportal.co.uk/testrequest/
Signing up to MyChart at the same time as booking the test means that you will receive the result more quickly.
If the testing pods are closed (eg at a weekend), then you can arrange a test via the NHS website: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-a-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/

Regional Placement
Testing procedure will have been explained during Induction Programme.
If you need to self-isolate, do so at your regional hospital in your accommodation there. Contact the Regional SubDean, who will be able to support you in doing this.

GP Placement
If outside Cambridge, ask GP Lead about their local procedure,
Or phone 119.

If you are on a GP placement or some psychiatry placements away from Cambridge, then there may be an issue if you are near the end of your placement and need to self-isolate, as the accommodation may no longer be available to you during your self-isolation. If this is the case and you are self-isolating because you have had close contact with someone, but are asymptomatic and have NOT tested positive yourself, then it is acceptable to return to Cambridge (ideally by private car), as there may be no alternative option available to you.
You must wear a fluid resistant surgical mask (not a face covering), observe social distancing and obey current guidelines whilst you travel. (See link below regarding travel guidance).
If you have tested positive, or are symptomatic and waiting for your test result, then of course you should NOT travel and should self-isolate where you currently are.
If your accommodation is no longer available, then contact Welfare (welfare@medschl.cam.ac.uk) to discuss this, although in the first instance you should enquire whether you can stay in your accommodation. Anyone who is Covid positive must not travel by public transport, including taxis.
There is very limited accommodation at Addenbrooke’s for students who are unable to self-isolate in their normal accommodation.

In regional hospital placements, your accommodation will still be available, and the Regional Trusts have contingency plans for providing this. If you need to self-isolate whilst on a regional hospital placement, then you should remain in the accommodation provided. The local placement will ensure that you are looked after in terms of food, medication etc. ClinSoc is also arranging a buddy system that can help provide support.
TRANSPORT TO PLACEMENTS:
If you are unable to get to a GP or regional placement because you were relying on a student who is self-isolating, then you should make your best efforts to get there by other means. If using public transport, then Government guidelines on travelling to a place of work by public transport must be followed:

There may be parts of the timetable that can be done virtually, so in the event of transport failure, contact the placement (ideally in advance if this can be predicted).

WHAT TO DO IF YOU TEST POSITIVE:
- You must follow current Government guidelines (see link at top).
- Inform the Clinical School AND your College.
- Provide your details on the University Covid-19 monitoring form so that test and trace can be initiated https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/stay-safe-cambridge-uni/report-symptoms-and-get-a-test/covid-monitoring-form
- Self-isolate for 10 days from the day you developed symptoms. If asymptomatic, then self-isolate for 10 days from the date of your test. Note you may be able to reduce this to 7 days if you meet the criteria. See section below “Returning to Placement after a Positive Result”.
- Let your household know they must self-isolate for 10 days from the date you developed symptoms. If you are asymptomatic, the time period starts on the date of your test. If they develop symptoms themselves, they must self-isolate and get tested.
- If symptoms worsen, follow the advice above.

RECEIVING A NEGATIVE PCR TEST:

If you have been an asymptomatic close contact of a confirmed case:

You still need to self-isolate for the full 10 days from the day of contact, as there is a possibility that you could still develop symptoms and become positive. If you are fully vaccinated, then you may be able to stop self-isolation if you meet all the criteria. See section below “Returning to Placement after Contact with a Confirmed Covid Case”.

If you have been tested due to symptoms:

You do not need to self-isolate as long as:

- Everyone you live with or in your bubble who has symptoms has tested negative.
- You have not been told to continue self-isolation by Test and Trace.
- You are well enough to return to placement.
- If your test was equivocal, you might be advised to have a further test.
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

Because the rules are rapidly changing and vary for different destinations, they are beyond the scope of these guidelines. You must refer to current government guidance.

RETURNING TO PLACEMENT AFTER A POSITIVE COVID RESULT:

The self-isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 7 days providing that the following criteria are met. If the criteria cannot be met, then the self-isolation period remains 10 days. If in doubt, contact Occupational Health OccHealth@admin.cam.ac.uk. As guidelines can vary at different Trusts, if you are on placement away from Addenbrooke’s you should check what the local rules are with your placement lead.

Criteria for 7-day self-isolation:

- You should perform a LFD test on the 6th and 7th day of self-isolation, taken 24 hours apart. If both are negative then you can return on Day 8, providing:
- You have no Covid symptoms and there is no other reason not to return to work (such as having been “pinged”).
- You must do LFD tests on days 8, 9 and 10 of the isolation period. If any of these is positive, then you must self-isolate and wait 24 hours before doing the next LFD test.
- If the LFD test is positive on day 10 then daily LFD tests should continue and you should not return to placement until you have a negative result. Contact OH in this situation.
- On the days that you are working (ie day 8, 9 and 10), you should do the LFD test prior to starting and as close to your start time as is reasonable.
- You must continue to comply with infection control procedures and should wear PPE throughout the day.
- You must not work in any areas where you might have contact with immunosuppressed patients, including oncology, haematology, and transplant patients. This includes ANTS, PaNDR, C2, C5, C9, C10, D5, D9, E10, F5, G5, dialysis unit, haematology day unit and oncology day unit.

Note the day your symptoms began (or the day you had the test if you are asymptomatic) is Day 0, so the self-isolation period is this day and the following 7 or 10 complete days.

If you were asymptomatic and then develop symptoms, then the 7 or 10 days will usually be reset to the day your symptoms began. In this situation you should seek guidance from OH.

If you have had Covid, then you do not require a negative PCR or lateral flow test before returning to placement. These tests can be inaccurate for up to 90 days after having Covid. If you have had Covid, your symptoms have settled and you subsequently develop new Covid symptoms during the 90 days, then you may need to be retested. In this situation you should seek advice from OH.
Addenbrooke’s is accepting asymptomatic screening with Lateral Flow Device tests after being Covid positive, but you should not do a PCR test for 90 days after being Covid positive unless the screening LFD test is positive. If both are positive, then you will require further investigation with virology. Any such circumstances should be discussed with OH.

RETURNING TO PLACEMENT IF SYMPTOMATIC BUT WITH A NEGATIVE PCR RESULT:

You can return to placement if well enough to do so. If any doubt, contact OH.

RETURNING TO PLACEMENT AFTER CONTACT WITH A CONFIRMED COVID POSITIVE CASE:

The government has changed the requirement to self-isolate following a positive Covid contact for those who are fully vaccinated. PHE guidance for NHS staff takes a more cautious approach because of the duty to protect patients and each other. You should contact OH for the Trust where you are working, and the decision will be made on a case-by-case basis. If working at CUH then complete the questionnaire on the staff portal and follow the advice provided https://cuhstaffportal.co.uk/covid-contact-notification-return-to-work-questionnaire/

Before returning to placement, you need the agreement of OH and factors considered will include:

- A negative PCR test. Do not attend placement whilst waiting for the result.
- You must be fully vaccinated to avoid self-isolating, and to be at least 14 days after the second vaccination at the point of exposure.
- If you have been approved by OH to continue to work in the 10 days following close contact, you must perform daily LFD tests for the duration of this period. If the lateral flow test is positive, you must self-isolate and perform a PCR test.
- CUH currently requires you to perform daily PCR tests when working on site during this 10-day period.
- You must be (and remain) asymptomatic.
- You must follow any infection prevention and control (IPC) measures that are in place, in line with current guidance.
- If the positive contact is with a member of your household, then you must self-isolate for the full 10-day exclusion period.
- If you work with clinically extremely vulnerable / immunocompromised patients, then you should not return to placement and must contact OH for advice.

If the above criteria cannot be met, then you must continue to self-isolate for the 10-day period.

This policy does not currently apply if you received your two vaccination doses outside the UK. In this situation you still need to self-isolate for the usual 10 days.
You should inform the Placement Admin and Year Admin if you are off, and it is a courtesy to inform anyone who will be leading a teaching session that you will miss. You should discuss making up any time missed from a placement with the Placement Lead.

If the time cannot easily be made up within the placement, then the Placement Lead will discuss this with the Deanery Team. Remember that every placement has to be satisfactorily completed and signed off. In General Practice, where placements are spread over a year, this means an overall pass for the year.

Returning to placements where you have contact with immunocompromised patients
This applies particularly to Oncology, Haematology and Transplant wards, but remember that you can have contact with immunocompromised patients on other attachments. Local senior clinical decision-makers may request that you are redeployed to other areas of lower risk where appropriate.

If you have tested positive, then before you can have contact with immunocompromised patients, you must contact OH and the following conditions must be met:

- You must be at least 10 days after the onset of your symptoms or positive test.
- You must have been apyrexial for at least a week.
- You must have had a negative test following your positive test. This can be arranged by contacting OH directly, once the first two criteria are met.

Remember that because control measures are generally good in clinical areas, there may be a higher risk of Covid-19 transmission by staff-to-staff contact than by patient-to-staff contact.

It is easy to become forgetful or complacent in non-clinical areas such as common rooms or meeting rooms.

Dr Roger Petter
Deputy Lead for Student Welfare
University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine
rp639@medschl.cam.ac.uk

Version 14.1
04 January 2022