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

It is important to follow current government guidance. This has been updated to include advice for managing symptoms of a respiratory infection as well as a positive Covid test: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection/managing-healthcare-staff-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-or-a-positive-covid-19-test-result


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

With changes to national Covid legislation, the University is no longer expecting students to complete a monitoring form if positive and the University is no longer recording case numbers. However, the Clinical School still needs to record positive cases as part of planning for placements and for your exams.

**Therefore, if symptomatic or positive, please continue to self-report via MedEd:** https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/student-covid-reporting/

ASYMPTOMATIC & SYMPTOMATIC TESTING:

CUH is no longer doing asymptomatic testing for staff, and the twice-weekly testing programme has been paused. The University’s asymptomatic testing programme has also stopped. Asymptomatic testing for immunocompromised patients in hospital continues.

If on regional placement, you should check what screening is offered where you are based.

If you have any relevant symptoms (including those of an URTI), then you should do an LFD test. If this is negative but you are still worried, then you should return a PCR from your swab pack. If you have no LFD test available, then you should return a PCR. If you have no LFD test and no swab pack, then you should book a PCR test from the University Pod via CUH Occupational health.

All NHS staff can order LFDs, to use if they have symptoms, via the Government website https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests. Free LFD tests are no longer available for asymptomatic testing.

COVID-19 PCR Swabs can be arranged by
- CUH Portal https://cuhstaffportal.co.uk/testrequest/ (You will be booked into the next available appointment on next working day)
- Calling Occupational Health 01223 216767 (option #1) Mon-Fri 08:30 – 16:30

**MASKS**

The routine requirement to wear masks has now been removed in the Clinical School building and the Deakin Centre, but you should still be courteous and aware of those around you. You are still required to wear masks in high-risk situations; where patients are being treated with respiratory conditions; are at high risk, eg immunosuppressed; have suspected or confirmed Covid; as part of PPE required for specific procedures; or in ED where patients have not been triaged. If a patient asks you to wear a mask, we expect you to do so unless there is a clear reason not to.

**CRITERIA FOR SELF-ISOLATION:**

i) **Symptoms**  
The three key symptoms (high temperature >37.8 or feeling feverish; new intermittent or persistent cough or worsening of usual cough; and loss or change in sense of taste or smell) have been expanded to include more general symptoms of a URTI. You should therefore test for Covid with any of the following symptoms:

- continuous cough
- high temperature, fever, or chills
- loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell
- shortness of breath
- unexplained tiredness, lack of energy
- muscle aches or pains that are not due to exercise
- not wanting to eat or not feeling hungry
- headache that is unusual or longer lasting than usual
- sore throat, stuffy or runny nose
- diarrhoea, feeling sick or being sick

This test can be with either:

- LFD
- PCR – using a CUH swab pack (unless you have had Covid-19 in the previous 90 days, in which case testing should only be with LFDs)

You must stay off work until the result of this test is known.

ii) **Positive test**

iii) **Close Contact** – this **may** not now require self-isolation:
If you have close contact with someone outside of your household, remain vigilant for any symptoms (as listed above) and undertake a test if they occur. You may continue at work as normal, as long as you do not have symptoms or a positive test.

If you are a household or overnight contact of someone who has had a positive Covid-19 test, work from home for 10 days if this is feasible. If it is not, test daily using an LFD for 7 days after the day of contact.

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 withing 1 metre; at least 15 minutes within 2 metres; or sharing a car, UNLESS appropriate PPE was being worn.

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

Self-isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms.

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

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 5 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 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 and self-isolates until their result is known. See:

An asymptomatic contact can stop self-isolating if the index case tests negative.

CUH recommends that if you have a symptomatic household member, you arrange a PCR as soon as possible. The rationale for this is that if the PCR for your household member is positive, you must have a
negative PCR before you can return to work on site in a healthcare setting. (See section below on Return to Placement after Contact with a Confirmed Covid Case).

**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 asymptomatic 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.

**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, 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: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers

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 https://www.medschl.cam.ac.uk/student-covid-reporting/
- 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 5 days if you meet the criteria. See section below “Returning to Placement after a Positive Result”.
- If symptoms worsen, follow the advice above.

POSITIVE LFD TEST:

If you have a positive LFD test you should self-isolate immediately and follow the instructions for a positive PCR.

The requirement to undertake a confirmatory PCR test after a positive LFD test has been removed, unless:

- You have received an email or letter from the NHS because of a health condition that means you may be suitable for new Covid-19 treatments.
- You are doing LFD tests as part of a research or surveillance programme, and the programme asks you to do a follow up PCR test.
- You have a positive day 2 LFD test after arriving in England from another country.

RECEIVING A NEGATIVE TEST:

If you have a negative LFD or PCR test you can attend work if you do not have a high temperature (37.8°C or above), feel well enough to do so, do not work in a designated high-risk area (see below “Returning to placements where you have contact with immunocompromised patients”), and have not been told to continue self-isolation by Test and Trace.

If the test was a PCR, it does not need to be repeated. However, if it was an LFD, you must either:

- Test again with an LFD for the next two days
- Test the same or next day with PCR, using a CUH swab pack.
If in doubt, contact OH.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

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

RETURNING TO PLACEMENT AFTER A POSITIVE COVID RESULT:

The standard self-isolation period is 10 days, returning to work on day 11. You may be able to return before 10 full days if you have 2 negative LFD tests taken 24 hours apart. The first can be taken on day 5 or later. Therefore, the earliest that you could return would be on day 6 if you have a negative LFT test on day 5, and a further negative LFD test 24 hours later on day 6 before returning to placement. The self-isolation period has been reduced from 10 to 5 days only if 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. 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 5-day self-isolation:

- You should perform an LFD test on the 5th and 6th day of self-isolation, taken 24 hours apart. If both are negative then you can return on Day 6, providing:
  - Symptoms have resolved (or are only cough or altered taste/smell) and there is no other reason not to return to work (such as having been “pinged”).
  - You must do LFD tests on days 7, 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. Two further negative tests, taken 24 hours apart, are required to return before day 11.
  - If the LFD test is positive on day 10 then you should contact OH. You may be able to return to placement on day 11 if you are not working with high-risk patients if OH agrees.
  - On the days that you are working (ie day 7, 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 properly throughout the day.
  - You must not work in any areas where you might have contact with immunosuppressed patients, including oncology, haematology, and transplant patients. At Addenbrooke’s, this includes ANTS, PaNDR, C2, C5, C9, C10, D5, D9, E10, F5, G5, dialysis unit, haematology day unit and oncology day unit. (Or the equivalent areas if working at a different hospital). If in doubt, discuss with Occupational Health.

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 5 or 10 complete days.

If you were asymptomatic and then develop symptoms, then the 5 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 LFD test before returning to placement. PCR 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 usually do a PCR test for 90 days after being Covid positive.

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

Although 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/](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. You must self-isolate whilst waiting for the result. If you have had Covid-19 in the last 90 days, then your PCR may be inaccurate, and you should contact OH for advice.
- 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 any of these lateral flow tests is positive, you must self-isolate and contact OH.
- You must be (and remain) asymptomatic. If you develop any symptoms or have a positive LFD test during this period, you must self-isolate immediately and do a PCR test.
- 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 CUH requires you to do a Day 5 PCR test. Day 5 = day 5 of the household contact’s self-isolation period. If working in another Trust, then follow the local guidelines where you are based.
- If you work with clinically extremely vulnerable / immunocompromised patients, then you should not return to placement and must contact OH for advice. This includes oncology / haematology / transplant / dialysis patients. You should also discuss this with your Placement Lead, as with their agreement it may be possible for you to work in other areas.

If the above criteria cannot be met, then you must continue to self-isolate for the 10-day period. You will be guided by OH if this is the case. If you are not fully vaccinated, then you
must self-isolate for the full 10-day period and perform a PCR test on Day 9 of your self-isolation period, only returning to placement if this is negative.

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 afebrile 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.

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