

## Guidance for GW Employees Who Have Symptoms Consistent with COVID-19

### **Introduction**

You have indicated on your daily COVID-19 symptom tracker survey that you have one or more [symptoms consistent with COVID-19](#). You must self-quarantine immediately and take the following actions. Self-quarantine means staying home, monitoring your health and maintaining social distancing (at least 6 feet) from others at all times. If you need to be around other people or animals in or outside of the home, wear a cloth face covering.

There are several important steps you must follow now. Details of each step are described below:

1. Begin to self-quarantine.
2. Notify your supervisor you are sick and will not be reporting to class/work. You do not need to tell them that you have COVID-19 symptoms.
3. You will need to immediately schedule a test for COVID-19 at <https://mychc.gwu.edu/>.
4. Contact Occupational Health 202-677-6230. The number is answered 24/7.
5. Monitor symptoms and seek medical care immediately for any serious symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort or feeling faint.
6. End your quarantine.

### **Step 1: Begin to Self-Quarantine**

While you are in quarantine, a hold will be placed on your GWorld card restricting your access to campus spaces. Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent the spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. Your quarantine will last until you are cleared by a provider in GW Occupational Health to return to campus.

Steps to Quarantine:

- You will need to quarantine in your residence and monitor yourself for symptoms. Regardless of your test results, you may remain in self-quarantine for up to 14 days unless a provider clears you to return to campus (see End Quarantine below for more details).
- If you live alone, many grocery stores and pharmacies offer delivery. A friend or relative may also bring you the supplies you need, however, they should not spend significant time in your home.
- Avoid contact with others and prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in your home.
- As much as possible, stay in a specific room and away from other people who live in your home. Use a separate bathroom if available. Restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick. More guidelines for quarantining in your home where you live with others can be found in the [CDC's Shared- Housing Guidelines](#).
- Wear a face mask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets, and before you enter a health care provider's office. If you are short of breath when wearing a mask, then people who live with you should wear a face covering if they are in the same room as you.



- Clean your hands often: wash with soap and water at least 20 seconds or, although less preferable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
- Wash hands especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and clean your hands immediately.
- Avoid sharing personal household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water. More details can be found in the [CDC's Disinfecting-Your-Home Guidelines](#).
- For additional quarantine guidance, please see the [CDC's Quarantine Instructions](#).

### **Step 2: Notify Your Supervisor**

As you would for any illness that would keep you out of work, you should notify your supervisor that you are sick and will not be reporting to work. You do not need to tell them that you have COVID-19 symptoms. Additionally, the GW Campus COVID-19 Support Team (CCST) will be contacting you very soon to review the quarantine instructions.

### **Step 3: Immediately Schedule a COVID-19 Test**

You will need to immediately schedule a test for COVID-19 at <https://mychc.gwu.edu>.

Based on the results of your Occupational Health consultation and COVID-19 test result, one of the following will occur:

1. If your test result is positive for COVID-19, then you have been infected with the COVID-19 virus. You will then immediately begin self-isolation, per [DC Health's Isolation Guidelines](#). The GW Campus COVID-19 Support Team (CCST) will contact you to discuss your positive result and to coordinate your clinical care with Occupational Health.
2. If your test result is negative for COVID-19, a provider from Occupational Health will give guidance on whether your symptoms are likely from COVID-19 or another medical condition. They may recommend additional testing to help with that guidance. You will go into self-isolation for at least 10 days until cleared by Occupational Health if the provider believes your symptoms are COVID-related despite a negative test.

### **Step 4: Contact Occupational Health**

GW Occupational Health can be reached 24/7 by calling 202-677-6230. Occupational Health is the only unit authorized to medically clear you to return to campus. When you call, they will do a screening for any symptoms you may have that could be from COVID-19. They can provide medical care for you by telehealth if needed and provide any follow up care or testing recommended by their providers. There will be no charge for your first telehealth visit, but any follow up testing or healthcare services will be billed to your insurance. You may choose to seek care from your personal physician; however, you still must call Occupational Health because they are the only ones that can clear you to return.



### **Step 5: Monitor Your Symptoms**

Occupational Health will enroll you in a daily email symptom screen to assist in monitoring you until you are cleared to return to campus. Call Occupational Health or seek immediate medical care for severe or worrisome symptoms such as difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion, inability to wake or stay awake, bluish lips or face.

Treat your symptoms:

- There is no known cure for COVID-19 infection. Treatment is supportive.
- Hydrate well.
- Control your fever. Use acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) if possible. Try not to use Advil/Motrin/Ibuprofen or Aleve.
- Rest.
- Stay well nourished.

### **Step 6: End Quarantine**

You should remain in self-quarantine for 14 days until Occupational Health tells you otherwise. Your time in quarantine can only end with a notification from Occupational Health. You may not take yourself out of quarantine.

Contact Information:

- GW Occupation Health: 202-677-6230
- Medical Emergencies:
  - On campus, GW Police: 202-994-6111
  - Off campus, DC Police: 911
- Campus COVID-19 Support Team: [ccst@gwu.edu](mailto:ccst@gwu.edu)

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Please find additional FAQ's at <https://smhs.gwu.edu/occupational-health>

1. **Will I or my insurance be charged for COVID 19 testing and care from Occupational Health?**
  - You will not be charged for the COVID-19 surveillance testing. If your COVID-19 test is positive and you have symptoms, an initial telehealth visit with a provider in Occupational Health will be covered by the university with no charge to you or your insurance. However, if it is determined you need additional medical care beyond that, your insurance will be billed under the standard procedures used for all patients in the MFA. You may have deductibles or co-pays depending on your insurance plan. You will not be charged for follow up calls to clear you for return to campus or for calling Occupational Health with other questions.
2. **Can I go to my own primary care doctor if I want?**
  - Yes. However, you must still call Occupation Health if you have a positive COVID-19 test. Occupational Health is the only office that can clear you to return to campus when your quarantine period ends.
3. **If I am scheduled for a telehealth appointment through Occupational Health, what do I do to prepare?**
  - If you are scheduled for a telehealth appointment, you will



be given information on how to register as a patient in the MFA and instructions on how to have the visit on your computer or mobile device. We will use a version of Zoom that is secure for sharing health information. You should prepare to discuss the details of your symptoms and when they started. You should be prepared to answer questions about any past medical history, allergies and all medications that you are taking. Writing this information down, with any questions you have for the provider ahead of time is a good idea. The following tips will help avoid any technical difficulties:

- o Follow the instructions sent to you when the appointment is scheduled and use the link and password provided.
- o Find a private location with good lighting.
- o Test your web-cam, microphone and speakers ahead of time.
- o If using a mobile device, make sure it is fully charged.
- o Make sure you have a reliable internet connection. In general, a wired internet connection is more reliable than Wi-Fi or cellular service.

#### 4. Can I still work from home?

- o If you have no symptoms or mild symptoms and feel well enough, you may be able to work from home if you are in a job that allows. You should first discuss this with your supervisor.

#### 5. How will my medical information be kept private by Occupational Health?

- o Occupational Health will follow the [MFA privacy policies](#). Only your work status, cleared to return to campus or not, will be shared with the university without any other details of your care.

#### 6. Will there be more services offered through Occupational Health?

- o Yes. We are planning an Influenza Vaccine program for all campus community members in October. While not yet available, we are working with the university to establish other services for pre-placement job assessments, care for workplace injuries and any special testing that may be required for some jobs on campus.

#### 7. For more COVID-19 information, check out the [CDC's COVID-19 Factsheet](#).

#### References:

[COVID-19: When to Quarantine](#)

[Isolate If You Are Sick](#)

[Case Investigation and Contact Tracing : Part of a Multipronged Approach to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

