

## COVID-19 Isolation: Guidance for GW Students Who Have Tested Positive for COVID-19

### Introduction

Your COVID-19 test is positive, which means you have been infected with the COVID-19 virus. We understand this may be unsettling news but the university has your safety and care as a top priority and has developed the necessary measures to help you recover as quickly as possible. You must self-isolate immediately. The GW Campus COVID-19 Support Team (CCST) will contact you very soon to discuss your COVID-19 test result, to facilitate communication with the GW CARE team, and to coordinate your clinical care with Colonial Health Center (CHC). There are several important steps you must take now:

1. Begin self-isolation at home.
2. Notify your professors and/or supervisors that you will not be reporting to class/work. You do not need to tell them your COVID-19 test was positive.
3. Contact the Colonial Health Center.
4. Monitor symptoms and seek medical care immediately for any serious symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort, or feeling faint.
5. Be prepared for CCST/DC Health Department follow-up.
6. If you are in need of mental health or counseling services please call 202-994-5300.

### Step 1: Begin Self-Isolation at Home

Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 from people who are not infected. The total length of time that you are in self-isolation will depend on how long you are experiencing symptoms (symptomatic). Some people who test positive for COVID-19 are asymptomatic meaning they do not have any symptoms. Both symptomatic and asymptomatic individuals need to self-isolate. You will be in self-isolation for at least 10 days, perhaps longer if you have symptoms. While you are in isolation, a hold will be placed on your GWorld card restricting your access to campus spaces.

#### *Self-Isolation Instructions:*

- Stay in your dorm/home for the entire isolation period except for medical emergencies. For students who live with other people, stay in a specific room and away from other people and use a separate bathroom, if available. Restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick. More guidelines for isolating in your home or dorm where you live with others can be found here: [Living in Shared Housing](#)
- Avoid contact with others and prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in your dorm/home.
- Wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets, and before you enter a healthcare 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 with you.
- Clean your hands often: wash with soap and water, at least 20 seconds, or (less preferable use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry).



- Wash your 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 trashcan and clean your hands immediately.
- Clean and disinfect your space, especially any shared areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. More details can be found here: [Cleaning And Disinfecting Your Home](#).
- If you have household members or intimate partners, please share [DC Health's guidelines for household members](#).
- For additional isolation guidance, please see [DC Health's isolation instructions](#).

### **Step 2: Notify Your Professors and/or Supervisors**

As you would for any illness which would keep you out of school/work, you should notify your professors/supervisors that you are sick and will not be reporting to school/work. You do not need to tell them that your COVID-19 test was positive. While in isolation and living on campus, you will have full access to the wireless internet so you will be able to attend classes remotely and participate in virtual student activities.

The Division for Student Affairs and the GW CARE teams have created a Student Support Team tasked with the support and response to students who test positive for COVID-19. The team will support students living on campus, living off-campus, or completing their semester virtually from home or any other location. The GW CARE Team will reach out to you to provide support with basic needs such as food, essential items, and financial assistance.

### **Step 3: Contact the Colonial Health Center (CHC)**

CHC can be reached by calling **202-994-5300**. CHC will remotely monitor your progress, provide isolation guidance, and determine when the isolation period has concluded. Medical care will be provided via telehealth (phone and Zoom), and follow up care or further testing will also be provided if needed. **You will have a telehealth visit with the CHC on days 4, 7, and 10 of your isolation.**

You are to remain in isolation until:

- **At least 10 days\*** have passed since your symptoms first started **and**
- **At least 72 hours** have passed with no fever without taking fever-reducing medication **and**
- Your symptoms have markedly improved

If you tested positive but never had any symptoms, then you must wait until at least 10 days have passed since you were tested.

**You must contact the Colonial Health Center to end your isolation.**

*\* Persons who experienced severe illness should consult with their providers as they may have to isolate until 20 days have passed since symptoms first started.*



#### **Step 4: Monitor Your Symptoms**

The Colonial Health Center will give you instructions on how to care for yourself at home. They will also review instructions on when to seek medical care immediately.

Symptoms may include the following: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), 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, or otherwise feeling unwell.

If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek immediate medical care: 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.
- Drink plenty of fluids/water.
- Control your fever. Use acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) if possible. Try not to use ibuprofen (e.g. Advil/Motrin or Aleve).
- Rest
- Stay well nourished.
- You may need a prescription for anti-nausea medication or an inhaler. Call 202-994-5300 to discuss with a clinician whether a prescription is appropriate in your circumstances.

#### **Step 5: Be Prepared for CCST/DC Health Department Follow-up**

A member of the CCST and DC Health will reach out to conduct an interview. These interviews will include collecting information on the following:

- Symptoms
- Clinical history
- Information about your activities and close contacts starting 48 hours before your COVID-19 symptoms appeared or your positive test result.
  - o Your information will remain confidential and is collected only to inform public health action such as contacting those who need to be quarantined to prevent further spread.
  - o For additional information on this process, please see the [CDC's contact tracing fact sheet](#).

#### **Step 6: If you are in need of mental health and counseling services**

Telehealth services (via phone and zoom) are also available with CHC providers for:

- Medical services
- Counseling and psychological services
- Psychiatry services

Please call 202-994-5300

#### **Contact Information:**

- Colonial Health Center: 202-994-5300
- Medical Emergencies: On campus, GW Police: 202-994-6111/Off campus, DC Police: 911
- GW CARE Team: 202-994-6555 or [gwcares@gwu.edu](mailto:gwcares@gwu.edu)
- Campus COVID-19 Support Team: [ccst@gwu.edu](mailto:ccst@gwu.edu)



### Additional Resources:

If medications are needed, there are pharmacies located near the Foggy Bottom and Mt Vernon Campus.

- Foggy Bottom: The CVS at 2000 Pennsylvania Avenue - 202-296-0329
- Mount Vernon: The CVS at 4859 MacArthur Boulevard - 202-965-6548

You may request medications from any pharmacy, and some may provide delivery service. For more information, please see [CVS same-day delivery](#).

If you live on campus, food will be provided by the GW CARE Team. If you live off campus, [Whole Foods Foggy Bottom](#) offers grocery delivery services.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is isolation?** Isolation means staying completely separate from others. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), isolation is a measure taken to separate people who have tested positive for COVID-19 away from others who are not sick.
2. **How is isolation different from quarantine?** Isolation separates sick people from people who are not sick, while quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to see if they become sick.
3. **How long does isolation last?** Generally, 10 days, but it depends on when symptoms started and the severity of your illness. Please speak with the CHC to discuss your specific situation.
4. **Am I allowed to have contact with others/have visitors?** Unfortunately, you cannot visit others or have visitor's due to the risk of contracting or/ spreading COVID-19. We encourage you to stay connected through phone calls and video chats.
5. **What are my options for food and dining while in isolation?** If you live on campus, the GW CARE Team will contact you to make arrangements that accommodate specific dietary restrictions and/or food allergies.
6. **How can I get essential items I need while in isolation?** The University will provide delivery of essential packages and mail for students in isolation.

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

