

Guidance for GW Employees Who May Have Been Exposed to COVID-19

Introduction

You have been identified as someone who may have been exposed to COVID-19, and you must now self-quarantine immediately. 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 take now:

1. Begin self-quarantine.
2. Notify your supervisor you are sick and will not be reporting to work. You do not need to tell them you may have been exposed to COVID-19.
3. Contact Occupational Health 202-677-6230. The phone is answered 24/7.
4. Monitor symptoms and seek medical care immediately for any serious symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort or feeling faint.
5. Schedule a COVID-19 test five days from your last exposure to a positive COVID-19 case.
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 and 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 experiencing symptoms. We recommend that you maintain quarantine for 14 days as the safest course of action, self-monitor your symptoms, and consult with a health care provider if any symptoms develop.

Steps to Quarantine:

- You will need to quarantine in your home and monitor yourself for symptoms. Regardless of your test results, the safest course of action is to remain in self-quarantine for 14 days, unless a provider clears you to return to campus (see *Ending 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 when you live with others can be found in the [CDC's Shared- Housing Guidelines](#).
- Wear a facemask 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 for 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 about your COVID-19 status. Additionally, the GW Campus COVID-

19 Support Team (CCST) will be contacting you very soon to discuss your COVID-19 exposure and review the quarantine instructions. If you have any questions about your leave from work, please contact your Human Resources Business partner.

Step 3: 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 tele-health if needed and provide any follow up care or testing recommended by their providers. There will be no charge for your first tele-health 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 4: 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 or bluish lips or face.

Step 5: Schedule a COVID-19 Test

You will need to schedule a test for COVID-19 at <https://mychc.gwu.edu> for at least five days from your last exposure to a positive COVID case.

Based on the results of your CHC 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 virus that causes COVID-19. 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, see Step 6 for Ending Quarantine.

Step 6: Ending Quarantine

We recommend that you maintain quarantine for 14 days as the safest course of action. However, based on updated guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ending quarantine after seven days (on day eight) after exposure may be acceptable if:

- You have a negative COVID-19 test taken at least five days after possible exposure to COVID-19.
AND
- You do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during quarantine.
AND
- You continue to self-monitor for symptoms until 14 days after the last exposure.

If you do not get a COVID-19 test you will remain in quarantine for 10 days and may end quarantine if:

- You do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during quarantine.
AND
- You continue to self-monitor for symptoms until 14 days after the last exposure.

Your time in quarantine can only end with a notification from Occupational Health or CCST. You may not take yourself out of quarantine.

Contact Information:

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

Frequently Asked Questions

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

1. **What is quarantine?** Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.
2. **How is quarantine different from isolation?** While “quarantine” and “isolation” are often used interchangeably, they mean different things. “Quarantine” is used when a person has potentially been exposed to an illness and needs to separate from other people to see if they develop symptoms and become sick. “Isolation” is used when someone has symptoms or is confirmed to have an illness. See [Quarantine vs. Isolation](#).
3. **What counts as a close contact?**
 - You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for at least 15 or more minutes.
 - You provided care at the home/workplace of someone who is sick with COVID-19.
 - You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them).
 - You shared eating or drinking utensils.
 - They sneezed, coughed or somehow got respiratory droplets on you.
4. **How long does quarantine last?** We recommend that you maintain quarantine for 14 days as the safest course of action. Based on updated guidance from the CDC, you can end quarantine after seven days (on day eight) after exposure if: you have a negative COVID-19 test taken at least 5 days after possible exposure to COVID-19, and you do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during quarantine, and you continue to self-monitor for symptoms until 14 days after the last exposure. If you do not get a COVID-19 test you will remain in quarantine for 10 days and may end quarantine if you do not develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during quarantine and you continue to self-monitor for symptoms until 14 days after the last exposure. However, if you develop symptoms during your quarantine, please speak with Occupational Health to discuss your specific situation. See [When to Quarantine](#).
5. **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 tele-health 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.
6. **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.
7. **If I am scheduled for a tele-health appointment through Occupational Health, what do I do to prepare?** If you are scheduled for a tele-health 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:

- Follow the instructions sent to you when the appointment is scheduled and use the web-link and password provided.

- Find a private location with good lighting.
 - Test your web-cam, microphone and speakers ahead of time.
 - If using a mobile device, make sure it is fully charged.
 - Make sure you have a reliable internet connection. In general, a wired internet connection is more reliable than WiFi or cellular service.
8. **Can I still work from home?** 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.
9. **How will my medical information be kept private by Occupational Health?** 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.

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](#)