

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. You must self-isolate immediately, regardless of your vaccination status. If you are fully vaccinated, it is important that you follow isolation instructions because you could still spread the virus to others. 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. If the GW Campus COVID-19 Support Team (CCST) hasn't already contacted you, a member of the team will be contacting you very soon to discuss your COVID-19 test result. 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. Monitor your symptoms and seek medical care immediately for any serious symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest discomfort, or feeling faint.
4. Contact the Colonial Health Center if you need medical assistance, 202-994-5300.
5. Be prepared for CCST/CHC/Local Health Department follow-up within the next 10 days.
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 you are in self-isolation will depend on how long you experience symptoms (symptomatic) and is determined by a medical provider at GW Colonial Health Center. Some people who test positive for COVID-19 are asymptomatic and 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 are first asymptomatic and later develop symptoms or your symptoms continue. 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 room/isolation room/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 trash can 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](#).
- For additional isolation guidance, please see [DC Health's](#), [Virginia DOH's](#), or [Maryland DOH's](#) isolation instructions. If you have household members or intimate partners, please share [CDC's](#)

Visit onward.gwu.edu for the latest updates and information about how the university is responding to COVID-19.

[guidelines for household members.](#)

Step 2: Notify Your Professors and/or Supervisors

Notify your professors and/or supervisors that you are sick and will not be reporting to work. **You do not need to tell them that your COVID-19 test was positive.** While in isolation, please work with your professors to access any information you may have missed.

The Division for Student Affairs and the GW CARES 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. The GW CARES Team will reach out to you to provide support with basic needs such as grocery and essential package delivery, temporary isolation housing, and communicating with professors should you run into issues.

Step 3: Monitor Yourself for Symptoms

The Colonial Health Center should have given you instructions on how to care for yourself at home. They should have also reviewed 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. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil).
- 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 4: Contact the Colonial Health Center if you need medical assistance

CHC can be reached by calling 202-994-5300. Medical care will be provided via telehealth (phone and Zoom), and follow up care or further testing will also be provided if needed. COVID-19 medical care will be provided free of charge via tele-health and free follow up care or further testing will also be provided if needed for the following 10 days. You may choose to seek care from your personal physician; however, **you must still wait to be cleared by CHC before you can end your isolation and return to campus.** You will have a telehealth visit with the CHC on the final day of your isolation.

You are to remain in isolation until:

- At least 10 days* have passed since your symptoms first started or 10 days from your positive result if you are asymptomatic; **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed with no fever without taking fever-reducing medication; **AND**
- Your symptoms have markedly improved; **AND**
- **You are cleared by the GW Colonial Health Center**

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

** 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 5: Be Prepared for CCST/CHC/Local Health Department Follow-up

A member of the CCST and someone from your local health department will reach out to conduct follow-up interviews. 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.
 - 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.
 - 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 available with CHC providers for:

- Medical services
- Counseling
- 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
- Campus COVID-19 Support Team: 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, the GW CARE Team can help with grocery deliveries or you can deliver food to your residence hall. If you live off campus, [Whole Foods Foggy Bottom](#) offers grocery delivery services.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Please find additional FAQs at <https://onward.gwu.edu/faqs>.

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

Visit onward.gwu.edu for the latest updates and information about how the university is responding to COVID-19.

severity of your illness. Please speak with the CHC, 202-994-5300, to discuss your specific situation.

4. Will I or my insurance be charged for COVID-19 testing and care from CHC? 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 CHC will be covered by the University with no charge to you or your insurance. Additionally COVID-19 related care and phone calls are provided free-of-charge for the following day. However, if you need additional medical care beyond that, your insurance will be billed under the standard procedures used for all patients in the CHC. You may have a deductible or co-payment depending on your insurance plan. You will not be charged for follow up calls to clear you for return to campus or for calling CHC with other COVID-19 related questions.
5. Can I go to my own primary care doctor? Yes. However, you must still call CHC if you have a positive COVID-19 test. CHC is the only office that can clear you to return to campus when your isolation period ends.
6. If I am scheduled for a tele-health appointment through CHC, what do I do to prepare? If you are scheduled for a tele-health appointment, you will be given information on how to have the visit on your computer or mobile device. CHC 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:
 - a. Follow the instructions
 - i. Log onto the medical portal, mychc.gwu.edu.
 - ii. Click on "Appointments" and you should see the telemedicine appointment there.
 - iii. Check-in for the appointment and then stay on that page after finishing checking in.
 - iv. The provider will see you are checked-in and will start the zoom call. You should then get a prompt saying you can join the call.
 - b. Find a private location with good lighting.
 - c. Test your web-cam, microphone and speakers ahead of time.
 - d. If using a mobile device, make sure it is fully charged.
 - e. Make sure you have a reliable internet connection. In general, a wired internet connection is more reliable than Wi-Fi or cellular service.
7. Am I allowed to have contact with others/have visitors? Unfortunately, you cannot visit others or have visitors due to the risk of contracting or/ spreading COVID-19. If you live on campus in a residence hall with other roommates, make a plan to keep everyone safe. The GW CARE team may request that you move to temporary housing while you are in your isolation period to help keep your roommates safe. We encourage you to stay connected through phone calls and video chats.
8. 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. They can provide support with basic needs such as grocery and essential package delivery, temporary isolation housing, and communicating with professors should you run into issues.
9. How can I get essential items I need while in isolation? The GW CARES team will provide delivery of essential packages for on-campus students in isolation.

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