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Infection Control Guidelines During the COVID-19 Pandemic

2021-2022 (V. 1)

These guidelines have been developed to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus while you are on campus, in the simulation learning area, in the clinical learning laboratory, and in the clinical environment.

We will continue to monitor the changing infection control rates in our region, state, and nation and anticipate that there may be changes in these guidelines as the year evolves. Masking rules are changing across the world based on infection rates and will continue to be interpreted. These guidelines follow the current [Centers for Disease Control Recommendations for Infection Control](#) and the [Minnesota Department of Health Recommendations](#) for actions to take if you are exposed to a person with COVID-19 in a personal or professional setting. You will be in close contact with others within our clinical learning environments and we are committed to maintaining a safe clinical learning environment similar to any health care environment. Please continue to wash hands often, stay home when ill, cover coughs and sneezes, wear masks as indicated by local infection rates and to protect vulnerable individuals, and monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 even if you are fully vaccinated.

Vaccinations:

WSU continues to **strongly recommend** that students and employees get a vaccine against COVID-19. This is particularly relevant due to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases and virus variants across the nation. Various clinical partners are beginning to set dates when COVID-19 vaccines will be required for all persons in their facilities this fall. For instance, **effective September 17, 2021** COVID-19 vaccinations will be required of all Mayo Clinic employees and students. Declination may be made for religious or medical provider-determined reasons in some facilities. Many partners have decided that unvaccinated persons will have less access to patient care areas than vaccinated persons. Final determinations of appropriate clinical placement will be made based upon each clinical partner and will be indicated in facility clinical onboarding requirements.

Being nonvaccinated against the coronavirus is your choice and right. However, clinical site placements may become more difficult depending on the various emerging requirements of our clinical partners. Being unvaccinated may affect your ability to progress in the program. We will do everything we can to find alternative clinical placements for unvaccinated students whose clinical sites require vaccination of students/faculty.

Definitions Used in the Following Guidelines:

Close Contact/Exposure = being less than 6 feet from someone for 15 minutes or more throughout a 24-hour period who has been told by a doctor, clinic, or hospital that they have COVID-19 and you were unprotected

Vaccinated = two weeks after the final COVID-19 vaccine dose [two doses in a two-dose series or one dose in a one-dose series]

Unvaccinated = less than two weeks after the final COVID-19 vaccine dose, one vaccine of the two-dose series, or no vaccine dose

EACH TIME BEFORE COMING TO WSU CAMPUS OR CLINICAL LEARNING SETTING

⇒ STEP ONE: PRE-SCREENING PROCEDURE

Answer the following Self Pre-Screening Questions:

1. Have you **tested positive** for COVID-19 within the past 14 days. Yes/No
2. Have you been in **close contact** with someone who has tested positive or is undergoing testing for COVID 19 in the past 14 days and were unprotected? Yes/No
3. Have you been **notified** by the Minnesota Department of Health to be currently in quarantine? Yes/No
4. Do you have any of the following **symptoms**? Yes/No
 - Fever (temperature of 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius or higher WITHOUT the use of fever reducing medications in the last 6 hours, temperature should have been checked within the last 24 hours) or 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

This list does not include all possible symptoms and the CDC will continue to update this list as more is learned about COVID-19.

⇒ STEP TWO: POST-SCREENING PROCEDURES

If you answered No, to the Pre-Screening questions, you are welcome to come to campus or clinical.

If you answered Yes, to any of the Pre-Screening questions, do not come to campus or clinical, notify your instructor of your absence, document the absence in Typhon, and contact the Winona State University [Ask a Nurse](#) to determine the potential return date. Variations exist for vaccinated persons as follows”

Question 1. Tested Positive

You should stay home and quarantine until:

- You have no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications during that time period) AND
- Any symptoms have improved (for example, when the cough or shortness of breath has improved) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- Take care of yourself. Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better, if you have symptoms.
- Notify your instructor that you will not attend in-person school/lab/clinical and contact the Winona State University [Ask a Nurse](#) to determine your potential return date.

Question 2. Close Contact

Vaccinated persons are eligible to come to campus and participate in in-person clinicals following an exposure, provided they are asymptomatic. You will not be required to quarantine but you must.

- Take your temperature twice daily—each morning and evening around the same time to monitor for fever. Before you check your temperature:
 - Wait 30 minutes after eating, drinking, or exercising
 - Wait at least 6 hours after taking medicines that can lower your temperature, like: Acetaminophen, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Naproxen, Aleve, Naprosyn, Aspirin
- Pay attention to symptoms that could be caused by a COVID-19, including cough, shortness of breath, and sore throat.
- As long as you do not have COVID-related symptoms you are not required to be in quarantine.
- You may continue to come to campus, in-person clinical settings, and locations in the community, as long as you follow state recommendations for movement, mask use, and social distancing.

Unvaccinated persons need to stay home and quarantine for at least 14 days after exposure. The specific timeframe will depend on your individual situation. **DO NOT COME** to in-person school/lab/clinical, contact your instructor to inform them of your absence and the Winona State University [Ask a Nurse](#) to determine your potential return date. Because COVID-19 vaccination provides good protection against infection, if you are fully vaccinated and have a high-risk exposure, you would not need to quarantine from in-person school/lab/clinical. Nurses will continue to be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccination. If you are not yet vaccinated and would like to be, look for testing locations on State of Minnesota: [Find Testing Locations \(mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/index.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/index.jsp) or ask your health care provider or employer how to become vaccinated.

You should stay home until:

- You have no fever for at least 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications during that time period) AND
- Other symptoms have improved (for example, when the cough or shortness of breath has improved) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Question 3. Notified by MDH to quarantine

- Stay home until advised to return.

Question 4. Symptoms

- Contact your instructor and tell them you will not be in in-person learning experiences (e.g. simulation, laboratory).
- If you start to have any COVID-related symptoms in the clinical learning environment, tell your instructor immediately and go home.
- If you get a fever or respiratory symptoms, you must immediately separate yourself from others.
- Stay home. Do not go to the store or socialize with others.
- Stay away from other people in your home. As best you can, stay in a different room in your home and use a different bathroom, if there is one.
- Learn more about protecting those in your house at *What To Do if You Have COVID-19* (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/case.pdf).
- Get tested.
- Learn more about what to do if you test positive or negative at COVID-19 Recommendations for Health Care Workers (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf).

SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS (WHETHER YOU ARE VACCINATED OR UNVACCINATED), STAY HOME AND GET TESTED FOR COVID-19

- Do not work while sick, even if you are only mildly ill.
 - If you are at home and become sick, do not go to work. Call your instructor to tell them you will not be in class.
 - If you become sick at class or clinical, tell your instructor immediately and go home.
- If you get a fever (100.0 degrees Fahrenheit/38 degrees Celsius or higher) or respiratory symptoms, you must immediately separate yourself from others.
 - Stay home. Do not go to the store or socialize with others.
 - Stay away from other people in your home. As best you can, stay in a different room and use a different bathroom, if there is one.
 - Learn more about protecting those in your house at [What To Do if You Have COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/case.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/case.pdf).
- Get tested. Learn more about what to do if you test positive or negative at [COVID-19 Recommendations for Health Care Workers \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/hcp/hcwrecs.pdf).

ON CAMPUS - COVID 19 INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES

General Areas/Classrooms

While face coverings are no longer required on campus, ***individuals who have not been fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to continue to wear a face covering*** in accordance with the CDC and MDH recommendations until they are fully vaccinated.

- When choosing to wear a mask on campus, recommendations are to wear a freshly laundered cloth mask. (REMOVE ONLY FOR EATING OR DRINKING – see instructions below). When not in use, the cloth facemask should be stored in a clean paper bag. Storing in a plastic bag may cause bacterial growth.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 3 - 6 feet and wash hands frequently.
- Limit personal items you bring to school/lab/clinical and the nursing lab.

Designated HS LL Nursing Laboratory/ST Simulation Areas:

Face coverings and eye protection **are required** to be worn in the HS LL Nursing Laboratory and ST Simulation areas.

- Once in the assigned lab or lab practice area put a medical mask and protective eyewear or protective face shield on. Regular glasses are not considered protective eyewear. You must use goggles, safety glasses, or a face shield.
- After each day in the lab, clean your face shield or protective eyewear with a disinfectant wipe and store it in a clean plastic bag with a small slit for air between uses.
- Maintain social distancing of at least 3 - 6 feet WHENEVER POSSIBLE.
- Once outside the lab, continue to wear your cloth mask (REMOVE ONLY FOR EATING AND DRINKING)

Food/Drink Breaks:

- Wash your hands.

- Sit at least 3 feet away from any other person.
- Do not talk while eating if your mask is not in place.
- Remove mask by touching ear loops/head straps only, not by the front of the mask.
- Do not touch your face.

CLINICAL ENVIRONMENTS PROCEDURES – COVID -19 INFECTION CONTROL PROCEDURES

- If you are scheduled for a clinical experience you will receive an email with detailed information on any clinical site-specific requirements.
- Prior to each clinical experience, answer the Pre-Screening Questions described above and follow the Post-Screening procedures described above.
- Face coverings are currently required to be worn at clinical sites

Upon entering and while at the clinical site:

- Wear a freshly laundered uniform into the building.
- Wear a freshly laundered cloth mask into the building (REMOVE ONLY FOR EATING OR DRINKING).
- Once in the clinical area remove and contain your cloth mask and put on your medical mask or respirator mask (such as an N95 or other face-fitting mask), if a respirator mask is required in the care area (REMOVE ONLY FOR EATING OR DRINKING)
 - One disposable medical mask will be used during and disposed of after each clinical day.
 - If your medical mask becomes soiled during the clinical shift you may ask the unit for a replacement mask.
- Protective eyewear is required during any patient contact. Your reusable protective eyewear should be cleaned with a disinfectant wipe and stored between uses. (ONLY WORN IN PATIENT ROOMS)
- Maintain social distancing of at least 3 to 6 feet WHENEVER POSSIBLE, do not congregate in the hallways or at the nursing desk.

Some clinical situations/sites require the use of an N95 respirator mask or other face-fitting mask. All WSU nursing students are required to be fitted for an N95 respirator mask. Please follow future directions from WSU Department of Graduate Nursing for scheduling fit-testing appointments.

Eating/drinking while at a clinical agency:

- Wash your hands.
- Sit at least 3 - 6 feet away from any other person.
- Do not talk while eating if your mask is not in place.
- Remove mask by touching ear loops/head straps only, not by the front of the mask.
- Do not touch your face.
- Don the mask before talking with those around you and before leaving the space. Touch only the ear loops/head straps of the mask, not the front of the mask.
- Wash your hands.

Upon leaving the clinical unit: (PERFORM STEPS IN THIS ORDER)

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove, disinfect, and store your face shield or protective eyewear for future use.
3. Disinfect any personal equipment used in direct patient care areas.
4. Dispose of your medical mask in the unit garbage. Put your cloth mask on.
5. Wash your hands.