

From: [CHWB Health](#)
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Subject: COVID Update—Student-related protocols
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Although we find ourselves still living with COVID-19, our campus is significantly safer than last year due to the exceptionally high vaccination rate of our students—just under 100% across all levels! We can be reassured that the vaccine is doing its job in decreasing symptoms and hospitalizations.

Health and safety guidelines for vaccinated individuals who test positive or are identified as a close contact to someone who tested positive have led to a number of questions from faculty and staff, particularly regarding our student population. I am writing to offer some clarity on circumstances related to COVID-19 and provide some key terms that I hope you will find helpful.

Students Who Test Positive

Students who test positive through UVM will be contacted and instructed by Student Health Services to isolate for 10 days from the day the test was administered or 10 days from the start of their symptoms. Student Health Services will send an email notification to the student services office of the student's college or school requesting academic flexibility for class attendance during their isolation period. This is the same process we use for any medical situation that requires a student to miss classes. If you are notified by a student that they tested positive at an off-campus site, please ask them to contact Student Health Services so we can help the Vermont Department of Health with contact tracing.

If a student tests positive and has been in class while infectious, the **entire class does not need to be notified**. Only those individuals who are **determined to be close contacts** will be notified through Student Health Services contact tracing. Vaccinated students, faculty or staff who are identified as close contacts do not need to quarantine; close contacts should monitor their health for any COVID-like symptoms and test within 48 hours and again on day 7.

While community transmission of COVID-19 does sometimes happen, it is more common for the virus to spread among household contacts. Last year, before the vaccine, we had no transmission in a classroom. Encouraging individuals to stay home if they are sick and to get tested if they have COVID-like symptoms will help decrease transmission. In addition, requiring masks indoors will help

slow the spread of the virus. When masks are worn by all, transmission has been shown to decrease by 70%.

Isolation and Quarantine

Only close contacts **who are unvaccinated are required to quarantine**. UVM requires students identified as close contacts by Student Health Services to get tested within 48 hours of being notified, and again on, or after, day 7 of exposure; student compliance with the testing requirement is tracked by SHS. This testing recommendation also applies to faculty and staff. All vaccinated individuals identified as close contacts need to wear a mask when around others, indoors and outdoors until they receive a negative test result from their day 7 test.

Unvaccinated students who are identified as close contacts by Student Health Services must quarantine until they receive a negative result from a test collected on or after day 7 of their exposure. They cannot come to class or interact with the public. Student Health Services will send an email notification to the student services office of the student's college or school requesting academic flexibility for class attendance for the specified time period.

Symptomatic Students

If a student develops symptoms and you are made aware of this, please have them call Student Health Services to arrange for a rapid antigen test, which can provide results in 15 minutes. This test tells whether a person has the actively replicating virus in their nose and are infectious. This test is best done between days 2–5 of symptoms. We will also collect a PCR test at the same time. If the antigen test is positive, the student moves to isolation and we start contact tracing. If the antigen test is negative, we ask the students to do a “soft quarantine” while waiting for the results from the PCR test. During this time, we ask the student to minimize public contact by staying out of class, not eating in the dining halls and instead getting food “to go,” and not gathering with others.

Student Health Services cannot provide names of students who test positive, but we can help with guidance and navigating COVID-19 situations with students. Please feel free to call us at 656-3350.

On behalf of the staff in Student Health Services, we appreciate your support during these challenging times. UVM has accomplished a lot and we have so much to be proud of.

Key terms

Close contact: Someone who was within 6 feet of a person who is confirmed COVID-19 positive for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period (for example, three individual 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). An infected person can spread SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, starting from two days before they have any symptoms (or for asymptomatic patients, two days before the positive specimen collection date), until they meet criteria for discontinuing home isolation.

Incubation period: The time it takes to develop infection after exposure to a virus. For COVID-19, this period ranges from 2 to 14 days.

Infectious period: The period of time a person with COVID-19 can spread the virus to others. It includes the 2 days before a person has symptoms through at least 10 days after symptoms start. For a person without symptoms, the infectious period is 2 days before the date the person tests positive for COVID-19 and until at least 10 days after.

Isolation: When a person who tests positive for COVID-19 stays at home and away from others, even those living in the same home. This prevents them from spreading the disease to others. The isolation period for COVID-19 is at least 10 days from start of symptoms, or from the test date if the person has no symptoms, and until 24 hours without fever, without using medicine that reduces fever, and until symptoms have improved.

Quarantine: When a person who is a close contact of someone with COVID-19 stays at home and away from others for up to 14 days to avoid spreading COVID-19 during the incubation period when they could become ill. As of fall 2021, only unvaccinated students who are identified as close contacts by Student Health Services need to quarantine.

Soft Quarantine: Terminology used by SHS to help students who have COVID-like symptoms emphasize the need to change their behavior while waiting for test results. Students in this category do not technically meet criteria for isolation or quarantine as defined above.

