

## Faculty/Staff

# What to do if a student is sick or has been exposed to COVID-19?

## Classroom, advising, or other learning or student life setting

### Overview

When a student discloses they have **tested positive for COVID-19 or been notified of a COVID-19 exposure**, faculty and staff should closely follow Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines as directed by the University's [Health Emergency Response Office](#) (HERO). This document is designed to describe those guidelines.

Students with a positive COVID-19 test will be interviewed by state or local public health investigators to review isolation requirements and to determine whether others may have been exposed. *Exposure is defined as close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more.* It is important to note that “contacts of contacts” are not considered exposed to COVID-19.

State and local public health officials are responsible for determining whether others may have been exposed and for ensuring those persons are notified either by the investigators assigned to the case or by contact tracers. Departments in the University may be asked by local or state public health officials to provide information or notification assistance in some instances.

On the Morris campus, Health Service at [hlthserv@morris.umn.edu](mailto:hlthserv@morris.umn.edu) is the primary liaison to state and local health investigators for student exposures.

For students in quarantine or isolation, instructors and staff should arrange accommodations for in-person classes, consistent with [UMN policy](#) for accommodations for legitimate absences due to illness.

Students **notified of exposure** are advised to consult with Health Service staff. Health Service will provide guidance on how to access a COVID-19 test which is recommended for all close contacts of known cases.

These students will be advised by public health officials to quarantine for a specified period of time.

For students in quarantine, instructors should arrange accommodations for classes regardless of modality, consistent with [UMN policy](#) for accommodations for legitimate absences due to illness. As is typical, additional accommodations requested via the DRC should also be provided.

Confidentiality of personal health information is paramount at all times. Instructors and staff **may not** disclose to classes, colleagues, or others that someone is sick, has a positive COVID-19 test, or is in quarantine due to exposure. If you believe that physical distancing guidelines have not been followed and that there has been a potential exposure, please inform your division chair or supervisor, who in turn should notify Health Services to determine if local or state public health investigators should be notified. No further steps or notifications should be undertaken unless directed by Health Service, or local or state public health officials. Names and identifying information should not be disclosed under any circumstances.

All members of the University community must comply with University guidelines and directives to reduce risk of exposure to COVID-19, including physical distancing in all settings and wearing [face coverings](#) in all indoor settings (with limited exceptions). The University's shared commitment is captured in [Stop the Spread of COVID-19](#).

## What to do if a student appears to be sick or tells you they may have been exposed to COVID-19

### Faculty and staff should:

- **Advise the student** to contact Health Service at 320-589-6070 or [hlthserv@morris.umn.edu](mailto:hlthserv@morris.umn.edu) or another trusted health care provider (even if the student appears to be asymptomatic). Health care providers will provide guidance on whether a test is needed, how to access testing at SCMC or elsewhere, and whether students should stay home from classes, work, and other activities.
- **Follow guidance** of Health Service and/or state or local health officials if they determine that others may have been exposed and need to be notified, tested, and provided guidance on required quarantine.
- **Inform your division chair or supervisor** if you believe that physical distancing guidelines have not been followed, and there has been a potential exposure on campus. Names and identifying information should not be disclosed.

*Exposure is defined as close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more. Note that classrooms maintaining reduced density, 6-foot physical distancing, face coverings, and other protocols are designed to limit opportunities for exposure.*

- **Arrange instructional accommodations if required:** If a student must isolate or quarantine, instructors should arrange accommodations for class participation (regardless of modality), as guided by [UMN policy](#) for legitimate absences due to illness. (Refer to the policy and related FAQs for guidance).
- **Advise students of mental health resources when appropriate:** Students who are feeling stressed or overwhelmed amid the challenges of COVID-19 should be encouraged to call Student Counseling at 320-589-6060 or the UMN Crisis Line at 612-301-4673 or text "UMN" to 61222 on evenings and weekends. Non-emergency scheduling can also be arranged via the Student Counseling website: <https://students.morris.umn.edu/health-and-wellness/mental-health/contact-student-counseling>

### Faculty and staff should **NOT**:

- **Do any investigating or contact tracing** unless specifically asked for assistance by Health Service and/or state and local health officials. Local and state public health officials conduct case investigations and will provide guidance and direction in the event they determine others need to be notified of a potential exposure. In some instances, units within the University may be asked to assist with this. Confidentiality of private health information is paramount at all times, and any request will be accompanied by specific instructions and guidance.
- **Disclose to anyone** that a student is sick, has a positive COVID-19 test, or is in quarantine due to exposure. Each individual's health status is protected by data privacy laws. Do not tell classes, colleagues, student groups, teams, or anyone else of

suspected or confirmed positive cases or individuals quarantined due to exposure unless instructed to do so by public health officials.

- **Communicate in any way about a positive case** (suspected or confirmed)—including messages within discipline/unit/division —without consultation with the Office of Communications and Marketing, [urel@morris.umn.edu](mailto:urel@morris.umn.edu), to ensure that we comply with [HIPAA privacy regulations](#), [FERPA guidelines](#) and [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act requirements](#)
- **Unilaterally change modality of class** before receiving guidance by health investigators and undertaking consultation with division chair, academic dean, and others as appropriate.

## What to do if public health investigators determine that a positive case may have exposed others to COVID-19

### Faculty and staff should:

- **Follow guidance** of Health Service and/or state or local health officials in the event that they determine that others may have been exposed and need to be notified of that exposure with instructions on testing and quarantine.
- **Inform division chair or supervisor** if you believe that physical distancing guidelines have not been followed, and there has been a potential exposure on campus. *Exposure is defined as close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case closer than 6 feet for 15 minutes or more. Note that classrooms maintaining 6-foot physical distancing, face coverings, and other protocols are designed to limit opportunities for exposure*
- **Follow communications guidance** of public health investigators, in consultation with the Office of Communications and Marketing. Communications are likely to go out only to those determined to have a significantly increased exposure risk as defined by MDH guidelines. Confidentiality of individual student health information must be maintained in accord with [HIPAA privacy regulations](#), [FERPA guidelines](#) and [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act requirements](#)
- **Once classes begin, consult with your division chair and the dean** to determine whether there is a need to modify instructional modalities. Each instructor, together with their discipline and in consultation with their division chair should develop contingency plans in the event that an early change in modalities becomes necessary.

## Expectations for students

### Students should:

- Self-monitor health every day for four critical symptoms: fever, respiratory symptoms, sore throat, or dry cough.  
*Broader list of COVID-19 symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, loss of taste/smell; or nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.*
- Not attend in-person classes or student jobs if they have symptoms or have been exposed to COVID-19
- Contact Health Services or consult with their healthcare provider if they feel sick or may have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Follow guidance from Health Services or health care providers about whether a test is needed and where to find testing site locations. Health Services will refer students to Stevens Community Medical Center for testing.

- If confirmed positive test for COVID-19: isolate as directed by health care professionals and public health officials.
- If exposed to COVID-19: quarantine as directed by health care professionals and public health officials.
- Provide information if requested by a public health investigator who will determine whether others may have been exposed. Assist in notifying those exposed as guided by a public health investigator.
- Follow healthcare provider or public health investigator guidance on when to return to in-person activities.
- Contact instructor as needed to request accommodations for classes as guided by [UMN policy](#) for accommodations for legitimate absences due to illness. (Refer to the policy and related FAQs for guidance.)
- If living in a University residence hall or apartment: contact the Office of Residential Life at 320-589-6475 to arrange housing and support for any necessary isolation or quarantine period. After business hours contact Public Safety at 320-589-6000.