

PRIMER FOR STUDENT RETURN TO CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT WITH COVID-19

This primer is to help ensure the health and safety of medical students as you reenter the clinical environment in the era of COVID-19. Please note that recommendations change frequently, so please discuss these topics with your instructor of record, your attending physician, and the rest of your team.

In general, medical students should not participate directly in the care of patients with known or suspected COVID-19 infection (PUI patients), although this recommendation may change in the future. This continues to be in an effort to limit the number of providers seeing these patients, and to preserve critical PPE. This is not intended to be a prohibition against the participation of medical students in the care of these patients, however. If there are particular educational or clinical care needs that make a student's participation critical or important, that participation is allowed, as long as appropriate PPE is available.

The fundamental principles of behavior are generally the same as those imposed by shelter-in-place orders:

- **Try to maintain at least six feet distance from others.**
- **Wear a mask when you are in the clinical environment**, as we now have a universal masking policy.
 - The mask will usually be a surgical mask unless a clinical situation requires you wear an N95 (not necessarily due to exposure to COVID-19, as you will generally not be caring for these patients, but patients with other airborne processes).
- **Assume that all surfaces may be contaminated.**
 - You do not need to wear gloves, but practice appropriate hand hygiene and pay attention to touching your face, wiping down anything that you use/place on a surface (i.e., cell phone, pens) with an appropriate disinfectant solution.

Obtain COVID-19 Testing and Document Results with Student Affairs

- All students must obtain an antigen or PCR based test for COVID-19 prior to a return to clinical work. Positive tests will result in a required two week self-isolation period. Students will follow the return-to-work policies of their clinical site. In addition, limited amounts of quarantine housing is available for students who are positive for coronavirus and cannot return to their residence due to untoward risk for other members of their household.

Prepare for Work:

- Wear clean scrubs to work every day if allowed. If you wear a white coat, wash it daily. In general the requirement to wear a white coat should be relaxed, if possible. Clothing should not be reused without washing. On some rotations, you are expected to wear regular work clothes so please check on the expected dress code at your site.
- Leave any non-essential accessories or jewelry (e.g. ties, watches) at home.
- If your hair is long, consider pulling it back. Consider wearing hair covering as well.
- Wear glasses rather than contacts if possible as a barrier to your eyes; if you do not wear glasses, you do not need goggles or face shields unless indicated by precautions of a certain patient you are seeing.
- Remind yourself what your FIT testing revealed about the size/type of airborne personal protective equipment you should use.
- Only carry with you essential items throughout the day (ID, keys, credit card), and consider using a mobile payment system, such as Apple Pay or Google Pay, rather than cash.

Arriving at Work:

- Leave enough time (~10 extra minutes) to get through potential health screenings at the entrances of sites, if applicable.

At work:

- **Wash your hands frequently** throughout the day, using soap and water, washing for at least 20 seconds OR hand sanitizer.
- Follow masking policy and **wear a mask** when you are in the clinical environment or any public space.

- Maintain social distancing policies when you complete your work if possible. Try to establish at least 6 feet with others as you write your notes, review the EMR, call consults, eat meals, etc. Also do so when you are rounding with your team and presenting your patients to your team.
- Wipe down surfaces with disinfectant solution, including computers, phones, cellphones, desks and communal tables throughout the day. Some services are recommending that this be done at least three times daily, especially when you start working in a new area. Leave your mask on when speaking on the phone.

Returning home:

- Consider changing clothes and/or showering before you leave work.
- When you arrive home, consider wiping down the inside of your vehicle with alcohol, alcohol-based solutions, diluted bleach (recipe), hydrogen peroxide, especially if you were working with PUI patients.
- Take off shoes before entering home and remove clothes in an isolated location (e.g., garage, laundry room, etc). Wash your clothes with your regular laundry detergent in hot water before wearing them again.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling dirty clothes.
- Disinfect any surface that you touched to enter (doorknobs, gates, etc.). Disinfect your phone, glasses, keys, and other loose items.
 - Wipe them down with alcohol, alcohol-based solutions, diluted bleach (recipe), hydrogen peroxide.
- Shower and put on clean clothes before you interact with any members of your family/household.
- When to stay at home:

In order to minimize exposure to patients and colleagues, you should stay home if you have any of the following symptoms: fever >100 F, chills, cough, difficulty breathing, severe fatigue, sore throat, diarrhea, muscle pain, or new loss of smell or taste.

In general stay home if you have any symptoms that are at all concerning that you may be sick.

If you stay home, you should notify your team, the site director, and the clerkship coordinator/department course coordinator.

Testing:

- If you or a member of your household have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had an exposure to a patient with known COVID-19 without proper precautions, arrange for testing through the Student Health Service or the county:
 - UCR Student Health Services: (951) 827-3031
 - Riverside County Public Health: (800) 945-6171
 - San Bernardino County Public Health: (800) 722-4777
- Notify Student Affairs of your possible exposure.
- Return to work will be decided based on the latest CDC guidelines, in conjunction with policies at the clinical site: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>

Resources:

CAPS: <https://mentalhealth.ucr.edu/>

Wellness Center: <https://well.ucr.edu/>

R'Pantry: <https://basicneeds.ucr.edu/rpantry>

Student Health: <https://studenthealth.ucr.edu/>

Wellness Director for UCR: Amanda.Smith@medsch.ucr.edu

General Questions: contact your clerkship coordinators and / or clerkship directors

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