

UAB Medicine FAQ COVID-19 and Healthcheck

UAB Medicine follows the CDC recommendations for healthcare providers. Healthcare providers includes employees in UAB Medicine (UAB Hospital, UAB Health System, UAHSF, and Callahan Eye Hospital), the School of Dentistry, the School of Optometry, and the Alabama Trauma Communications Center.

Symptoms

1. Is there a difference between seasonal allergy symptoms and COVID-19 symptoms?

- COVID-19 and seasonal allergies share many symptoms but there are some key differences between the two.
- COVID-19 can cause fever, muscle and body aches, new loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea which are not common symptoms of seasonal allergies.
- Seasonal allergies can cause itchy or watery eyes and sneezing, which are not common symptoms of COVID-19.

2. I have or recently had a symptom of COVID-19. What do I do?

- Complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus follow the instructions given, and also report in [Healthcheck](#).
- Remain under home isolation until you are cleared to return to work by Employee Health.
- You may be returned to work at the discretion of Employee Health.
- If you meet criteria for COVID-19 testing, you will be referred for testing.

3. I have a very mild symptom. Do I need to report it?

- If you are experiencing symptoms that are not new for you or that you are certain are caused by another condition you do not need to report them.
- If you have a new COVID-19 symptom or one that you cannot explain, then you are encouraged to report that on the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus and also in [Healthcheck](#).

COVID-19 Exposures

4. What is the definition of a close contact exposure for healthcare providers?

- A close contact exposure is defined as being within 6 feet of someone with COVID-19 for a total of greater than 15 minutes without the use of proper Personal Protective Equipment. This is calculated over a 24 hour time period.

- In general, this applies from 2 days before symptom onset until 10 days after symptom onset for the person with COVID-19. If the person with COVID-19 is asymptomatic, then it applies until 10 days after positive test for COVID-19.

5. I was exposed to a person (patient or community) with COVID-19.

a. What should I do?

- Complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus, follow the instructions given and also report in [Healthcheck](#).
- Employees can use the form found [here](#) to monitor/track symptoms.
- If you are asymptomatic you do not need testing at this time.

b. After the exposure, when can I return to work?

- You should perform self-monitoring until 14 days after the last potential exposure. If you do not have fever or other COVID-19 symptoms you can continue to work during this time unless otherwise directed by Employee Health.

c. A person that I live with has tested positive for COVID-19. What do I do?

- If a person you live with has been diagnosed with COVID-19, complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus and notify your supervisor.
- Report exposure and symptoms in [Healthcheck](#) also.
- You will be referred for COVID-19 testing. Remain under home isolation until you are cleared to return to work by Employee Health.

d. A person that I live with has been exposed to or has been tested for COVID-19. What do I do?

- If the person you live with is asymptomatic, you can continue to report to work as normal.
- If the person you live with has not received their test results or tests negative, continue to report to work.
- If a person you live with tests positive for COVID-19, see item C above.

e. A person that I have been in close contact with is quarantined due to an exposure. Do I need to be quarantined also?

- Asymptomatic employees who have had no close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19 themselves do not need to report a close contact exposure and have no work restrictions.

Testing

6. How can I get tested for COVID-19?

- If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or live with someone who has COVID-19, then complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus and notify your supervisor.
- Report exposure and/or symptoms in [Healthcheck](#) also.
- In most cases you will be referred for COVID-19 testing. Remain under home isolation until you are cleared to return to work by Employee Health.
- Asymptomatic employees who have had a close contact exposure may be referred for COVID-19 testing by Employee Health if it is required for contact tracing.
- Asymptomatic employees who have had no close contact exposure may be selected randomly for Sentinel Testing.

7. I completed the Employee Symptom and Exposure Form and Healthcheck, and I was referred for testing. When will I receive a phone call to inform me of my testing time?

- Employees who are referred for testing generally receive a phone call within 24 hours to schedule testing.
- If you have been referred for testing and do not receive a phone call to schedule testing, please call the COVID Testing Call Center at (205) 975-1881 to inquire about scheduling.

8. If I was referred for testing by Employee Health, where will I be tested?

- You should test at the UAB Highlands testing site unless otherwise directed by Employee Health in advance.

9. I was tested at UAB Highlands. When will I receive my results?

- Employees who test at UAB Highlands generally receive results within 24 hours.
- Employees who test negative will receive an email with test results.
- Employees who test positive will receive a phone call from a medical provider as well as a contact tracer.

10. I tested negative for COVID-19. When can I return to work?

- You may return to work when you are fever free for 24 hours and your symptoms are improving.

11. I tested positive for COVID-19 but I have not had any symptoms. When can I return to work?

- If you have not already done so, complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus and notify your supervisor.
- Report your positive result in [Healthcheck](#) also.

- The earliest that a person who has no symptoms but who tests positive for COVID-19 can be cleared to return to work is after 10 days have passed.
- If the person develops symptoms during that time, then the earliest they can be cleared to return to work is after 10 days have passed from symptom onset and when they are fever free with improving symptoms for 72 hours.

12. I tested positive for COVID-19 and have symptoms. When can I return to work?

- If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you should remain under home isolation precautions until you are cleared to return to work by Employee Health.
- The earliest that a person with COVID-19 can be cleared to return to work is after 10 days have passed from symptom onset and when they are fever free with improving symptoms for 72 hours.

13. I tested positive for COVID-19. Do I need a negative test to be cleared to return to work?

- As recommended by the ADPH and CDC, we do not use a test-based strategy to return COVID-19 positive individuals to normal activities. Rather, we utilize the time and symptom based strategy as noted above.
- No repeat testing is offered or required.
- Follow guidance in questions 11 and 12 about returning to work.

14. Does Employee Health notify the supervisor if an employee is directed not to return to work?

- The only time that a supervisor is notified of COVID-19 related work restrictions is when an employee tests positive for COVID-19, in order to assist Employee Health with contact tracing.
- In all other circumstances it is the employee's responsibility to immediately notify their supervisor of any COVID-19 related work restrictions they have been given.

15. Can I get an antibody test for COVID-19?

- Due to the limited utility of a positive antibody test and the requirement for a blood draw, it is not routinely offered through Employee Health at this time.

Healthcheck

16. Why is Healthcheck being implemented?

- Participation in Healthcheck by all employees helps keep us safe by helping to identify if the virus is spreading and determines whether we are experiencing any hot spots within our organization.

17. When will it end?

- There isn't a projected end date for Healthcheck at this time.

18. How do I sign up for Healthcheck?

- Go to the Healthcheck [website](#) and login with your Blazer ID.

19. Is Healthcheck HIPAA compliant?

- If an employee indicates they have symptoms or exposures, they are referred to Employee Health for further evaluation.
- All employee data is housed in a secure Employee Health electronic health record, and this data is not shared.

20. I do not want to provide my personal cell phone number in Healthcheck. Is there another option?

- Yes, you can use email instead and log into the website to complete your daily assessment.

21. If I am working from home should I still report COVID-19 symptoms or exposures through the Employee Health Exposure and Symptom Form and Healthcheck?

- Yes. UAB Employee Health is here to support all employees regardless of whether they are working onsite or remotely.
- All employees should follow the same processes, whether working on site or remotely.

22. If I am on vacation, am I required to continue to report symptoms or exposures through Healthcheck?

- We strongly encourage you to do so since it takes less than 10 seconds each day to complete.
- Employees with COVID-19 symptoms should still complete the Employee Exposure and Symptom form at www.oneuabmedicine.org/coronavirus, follow guidance from Employee Health, and complete Healthcheck.

23. Should hourly workers be paid for logging into Healthcheck and completing this daily?

- No; it takes less than 10 seconds each day to complete

24. What are the benefits of completing Healthcheck daily?

- Participation in Healthcheck by all employees helps keep us safe by helping to identify if the virus is spreading and determines whether we are experiencing any hot spots within our organization.
- We are all put at greater risk if this information is not collected. There is no discipline at this time for not completing Healthcheck daily.

25. Should managers monitor Healthcheck compliance in their areas? If so, how?

- Currently UAB Medicine managers are not required to monitor compliance in their areas.

26. How do I sign up for text messages in Healthcheck?

- You can provide your cell phone number in Healthcheck, and this will enable text messaging.
- Utilizing text messaging, you can quickly answer the daily questions on your phone.

General Questions

27. I traveled outside of Alabama. What do I do?

- At this time there is no requirement to report personal travel, however we follow the CDC recommendations for health providers regarding travel:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/>
- You should perform self-monitoring for 14 days once you return home. If you do not have fever or other COVID-19 symptoms you can continue to work during this time unless otherwise directed by Employee Health.

28. I fall into a high risk group (60+ years old, Heart Disease, Chronic Lung Disease, Immunocompromised, Diabetes Mellitus). Do I have to care for patients under investigation or a confirmed COVID-19 case?

- Our UAB Medicine healthcare team is made up of individuals from many communities representing a range of abilities, skills, perspectives, and life stages. Some members of our team are working while facing illnesses or treatments that may make them immune-compromised as a result; and there are others who are older than 60 years of age (over 2,200 people working in UAB Medicine fall into this last category).
- All UAB Medicine PPE policies, protocols, cleaning, social distancing, and other recommendations for providing care for patients with infectious diseases are designed to protect all healthcare workers, regardless of their age or health status.
- If individual units/departments have sufficient staffing to limit exposures of high risk staff at the moment, then they can manage to that end right now. However, if ultimately employees in the high risk groups are needed for coverage, they cannot be exempted from patient care responsibilities.

29. I heard that there are different rules for healthcare providers. Is this true?

- The Alabama Department of Public Health has issued separate guidance for healthcare providers in regard to COVID-19 isolation and quarantine. UAB Employee Health follows the appropriate guidelines for Healthcare Providers.
- Healthcare providers includes employees in UAB Medicine (UAB Hospital, UAB Health System, UAHSF, and Callahan Eye Hospital), the School of Dentistry, the School of Optometry, and the Alabama Trauma Communications Center.

30. Does it count as a Time and Attendance absence/occurrence if I am instructed to stay home or get sent for COVID testing? Will I be paid?

- COVID-19 has affected many employees, patients and families. We continue to encourage employees who have COVID-19 symptoms to report those to Employee Health and get tested if appropriate.
- Leaders are asked not to count these absences as “unplanned” and not to count them as an occurrence under the attendance policy.
- Employees who need testing will be scheduled at the UAB Highlands testing site.
 - a. Employees who test at UAB Highlands will be compensated while they test and wait for results.
 - b. Employees who test elsewhere without advance permission from Employee Health will use benefit time until test results are received.

31. What if there is a breach of my personal health information?

- UAB Medicine would follow our normal process if there is a suspected incident.