



**JABSOM COVID-19 Safety Practices,  
Communication and Return to School/Work Protocol  
As of August 22, 2023**

Aloha everyone. The CDC periodically updates its guidance regarding [transmission risks](#), [exposure](#), and [isolation](#). The JABSOM continues to monitor community prevalence and hospital capacity. We will implement additional mitigation measures if needed, including a return to a mask requirement. Most of our JABSOM learners and employees work with individuals at high risk of getting moderate-to-severe symptoms and/or frequent healthcare settings, so JABSOM policies have been stricter than the UH policies. **Except for medical student clinical skills and simulation sessions, masking is optional.** However, if we have a high number of learners/employees testing positive (i.e., a potential cluster), JABSOM may reinstitute an indoor mask requirement. **IMPORTANT:** Please respect an individual's personal choice to wear a face mask outdoors and indoors where face masks are no longer required. [Since the pandemic health emergency has ended, you should expect to pay for COVID-19 testing done at a pharmacy, lab, or clinic.](#) For this reason, we strongly suggest you purchase home testing kits. Not all clinical sites provide testing. See page 5 for more information.

**The isolation guidance remains unchanged and is consistent with the CDC guidance. Please continue to notify Dr. Jill Omori if you test positive.**

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# SUMMARY OF CHANGES

## DAILY HEALTH SCREENING

- No daily COVID-19 health screening checks or requirements.
- **However, if you are feeling sick, please stay home.**

## COMPLIANCE WITH VACCINATION REQUIREMENT

- [Up to Date](#) COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended.
- JABSOM continues to require up-to-date vaccination status for 'Imi Ho'ōla and MD program students to be consistent with hospital requirements.

## FACE MASKS AND OTHER PPE

- **REQUIRED**
  - If you are considered an exposure, please wear a well-fitted mask when you are on a JABSOM campus at all times (no eating or drinking with others) and in all settings (unless you are alone in your own enclosed office) for the full ten-day duration for persons after exposure to a person with COVID-19.
  - If you are returning to campus after at least 5 days of isolation (per protocol below), you must wear a mask at all times for the remainder of the 10-day period.
  - Clinical skills will continue using at least surgical masks, which we will provide. If needed during surge periods, we will provide unfitted N95s or KN95. Unless the mask is soiled or wet, the N95/KN95 can be reused up to five times, as the initial use will not be for a prolonged period. Additionally, these situations are not actual patient care settings where a fitted N95 may be required.
  - Students and employees working in clinical sites must continue to follow the site's protocols for PPE. Mask requirements in some clinical facilities may change, so please check with your preceptor, chief resident, or clerkship coordinator if you have any questions.
- **RECOMMENDED**
  - Masking is encouraged indoors when around people in crowded spaces and activities.
  - Surgical masks will be made available in classrooms and labs for those who prefer wearing one.

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING OR CAPACITY LIMITS

- No physical distancing requirements anywhere in the MEB or BSB.
- Café and classroom seating is at full capacity.
- Some clinical sites continue with capacity restrictions. Please get in touch with your preceptor or chief resident if you have questions.

## BUILDING/VENUE ACCESS

- The Health Sciences Library is open to the public.
- The MEB hours are open per the website.

## FOOD IN EDUCATIONAL & CONFERENCE ROOM SPACES

- Food is allowed in PBL tutorials and other spaces.

## VISITORS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

- **Visitors**, including vendors, tours, group events, those dining in the café, and interest group participants who are not enrolled UH students or employees:
  - No requirements screening or vaccination.
  - Depending on the planned activities, we may recommend a limit. If you have any questions about COVID-19 precaution measures, please contact Dr. Omori or our special events team.

## TRAVEL (see pages 8-9 for more details)

- There are no pre-arrival or post-arrival testing requirements UNLESS you work in a health care facility with those requirements. The requirements are different for HPH, Kaiser, and Queen's, so please check with the OSA, the specific facility, or your preceptor for those details.
- **We do strongly encourage people to do a home test prior to returning to campus after out-of-state travel, then repeat an antigen test on day 5.**

## POST-EXPOSURE TESTING

- All fully vaccinated persons should have a post-exposure test on day 5 or as soon as you develop symptoms. **Home testing is adequate.** Please check with your preceptor or hospital intranet for the latest guidance. Expect to pay out-of-pocket for tests done at a pharmacy or clinic.

## LABORATORIES

- For those working in the BSB or research areas, more specific safety and reporting guidance may be applicable to you. Please contact Dr. Mariana Gerschenson for more information.

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

This communication protocol related to COVID-19 further clarifies JABSOM-specific processes. This protocol applies to all JABSOM employees and learners. The safety of our entire JABSOM and UH 'ohana, including our family members and patients we care for, is of utmost importance. Therefore, we must help minimize exposures and slow the spread of COVID-19 at JABSOM and in the community. **Therefore, we ask that everyone follow the safety measures, illness or**

symptom response guidelines, notification of potential COVID-19 exposures, and actions regarding positive test results for COVID-19.

Our JABSOM designated campus official for this communication protocol is Dr. Jill Omori (808-221-0685). JABSOM Residents and Fellows will continue to report according to their specific guidelines. In addition, JABSOM clinician faculty should report their status per facility protocol.

**SYMPTOMS: Staying at home if you are sick and self-reporting**

- **Stay home if you are sick** and seek medical care as needed.
- **If you have any respiratory/throat symptoms**, obtain a COVID-19 test. For this purpose, a rapid antigen/home test is acceptable. If you have symptoms and a positive rapid antigen, you have COVID-19 and DO NOT need a confirmatory PCR test. Please check the Hawai'i DOH website for more information: [If You Become Sick | Disease Outbreak Control Division | COVID-19](#)
- Please note that fully vaccinated people who have become infected with the Omicron variants are experiencing very mild symptoms (scratchy throat).
- Drink plenty of water and other clear liquids to prevent dehydration.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. Stay in your own room if at all possible.
- Wash or clean your hands often with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- If you are experiencing symptoms that could be consistent with **COVID-19**, please get a test. If you do not have a primary care physician, please call either the Queen's Medical Center COVID-19 infoline (808-691-2619) or the Hawaii Pacific Health Virtual Clinic (808-462-5430 (Press option 2)). According to the CDC, the symptoms of COVID-19 may include the following symptoms that are new, worsening, or not attributable to a pre-existing condition:
  - Fever (>100.4 F) or feeling feverish (chills, cold sweats)
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Sore throat, nasal congestion, runny nose
  - Unexplained muscle or body aches, headache, fatigue
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
  - Unexplained skin rash
  - Chest pain or pressure

## **EXPOSURES AND TESTING**

**Definition of exposure**

- The [risk of exposure](#) varies depending on the length of time, level of exertion (of the infected person), presence of symptoms, distance, ventilation, and if you and the infected person were both wearing masks. Please see the CDC website for additional information to help you determine your risk of exposure. The more “moderate” or “high risk” situations that apply to you, the more likely you have been “exposed”.

- HOWEVER, if someone notified you that you were in an event / class / workspace with an infected individual, please consider yourself [exposed](#), wear a KN95 or N95 for 10 days if you are coming to JABSOM MEB or BSB, and test on day 5.
- For those with possible [exposure in healthcare settings](#): If you wore required PPE properly, you would generally not be considered an exposure. An N95 mask is required during aerosol-generating procedures. Please contact your clinical supervisor and notify your rotation coordinator for the latest facility protocols.

**EXPOSED (regardless of vaccination status)**

- **Please notify Dr. Omori if you are exposed**
- **Are not** required to quarantine if you do not have any symptoms since the current COVID-19 exposure
- Wear a well-fitted (i.e., double mask (cloth + surgical, KF94 or KN95) mask at JABSOM MEB or BSB. In the clinical areas, follow their protocol.
- Watch for symptoms of COVID-19 for 10 days following exposure.
- Test at least 5 full days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19 (date of the last contact is day 0)
- If you begin to experience symptoms, isolate yourself immediately and get tested. Then, stay home until you know the results. Wear a well-fitted mask around others.
- Students, residents, or clinicians working in hospitals should follow the facility protocols. Some facilities may offer testing if you were exposed during patient care at that facility. Others may not.
- Most insurances will not pay for testing in asymptomatic individuals. You can find more information and make an appointment for a test at [Walgreens](#) or [CVS](#). You may still have a co-pay.
- For those with possible [exposure in healthcare settings](#): Missing any portion of required PPE will likely result in a “high-risk” exposure – which essentially means staying out of the clinical learning environment for at least 5 days. Each facility has its own protocols for determining exposure and return-to-work status.

**Testing or having a diagnosis of COVID-19**

- If you get **tested** for COVID-19 because you have symptoms, you **MUST** stay home and [isolate](#) yourself until you receive the results of your test. **Please contact your immediate supervisor and Dr. Jill Omori (808-221-0685)** before returning to JABSOM. Subsequent actions, including whether you can return to campus if your initial test is negative, depends upon your vaccination status, health status, test results, nature of any potential exposure, and other factors.
  - **The preferred testing involves an RT-PCR/NAAT test** (i.e., a rapid antigen test or a diagnostic lab-based PCR test). If you do not have a home test (rapid antigen), then testing is available at [Walgreens](#), [CVS](#), all hospitals, and some urgent care clinics. Since the pandemic health emergency ended on May 11, 2023, there will be a charge for COVID-19 tests. **The cost of testing can range from \$70-150. The cost of the home test kits (i.e., self-testing) is in the \$25-30 range.**

- If you have symptoms and test positive with a rapid antigen home test, you do not need to confirm with a PCR test. Instead, you are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Please note that the recent variants' false negative rate of the antigen tests is high. Therefore, if you have symptoms and test negative, please repeat the test in 48 hours and continue to stay home.
- If you are **diagnosed** with COVID-19:
  - Stay home and [isolate](#)
  - Contact your immediate supervisor and the JABSOM-designated campus official Dr. Jill Omori (808-221-0685). Dr. Omori provides guidance to you and your supervisor to determine if anyone in the workplace was potentially exposed to you.
  - You should notify all of your close contacts in the preceding 48 hours that you tested positive for COVID-19.
  - Close household contacts need to strictly adhere to all strategies to reduce the risk of getting COVID: correct and consistent mask use, physical distancing, hand hygiene, avoiding crowds, environmental cleaning and disinfection, and ensuring adequate indoor ventilation.
  - Close contacts who develop symptoms within 14 days of their last exposure should be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate while awaiting results.

## RETURNING TO WORK AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- Please note that criteria for returning to may evolve, especially for [healthcare providers \(HCP\) and learners](#) (medical students, residents, and fellows). For JABSOM ohana working in clinical environments, that healthcare facility's requirements may supersede this JABSOM guidance.
- **Calculating isolation time:** Day 0 is the day of the first symptoms or the positive viral test result. Day 1 is the first full day after your symptoms developed or your test specimen was collected.
- - E.g., Exposure but no symptoms. Exposure is day 0. You must stay home/quarantine and get tested on day 5. For example, if exposure happened on August 15 (day 0), get your test on August 20 (day 5) at the earliest. You may return when you get your negative test result and if you remain asymptomatic.
  - E.g., Symptoms on August 15 and positive test results on August 17. Day 0 is August 15. Isolation for days 1-5 (until August 20). On day 6 (August 21), if you meet the criteria to get out of isolation, you may return to work or school but wear a well-fitted mask at all times and do not eat/drink around others for the remainder of the 10 days. People remain infectious but with lower viral loads through days 8-9.
- The [Hawaii Department of Health](#) and [CDC](#) criteria have not changed since August 2022. The following criteria are for those with mild-to-moderate illness, who do not live in a congregate setting, and who are not moderate or severely [immunocompromised](#).

- You must remain in isolation until **ALL** of the following criteria have been met:
  - At least 5 days have elapsed from the onset of symptoms (or from the date of a positive test for asymptomatic individuals) AND
  - You have been without a fever ( $\geq 100.4$  F) without the use of any fever-reducing medications (i.e., acetaminophen or ibuprofen) for at least 24 hours AND
  - Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) are significantly improving
- On days 6-10,
  - You should always wear a well-fitted mask at work/school/public and not eat or drink around others.
  - Avoid any public transportation or travel on days 6-10.
  - You should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 illness for a full 10 days after exposure, as should all close contacts.
  - Avoid being around people who are high risk.
- The return-to-work criteria is different for those with severe to critical illness or who are severely immunocompromised (at least 20 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; other criteria are the same as above)
- For those who tested (due to symptoms or exposure), stayed home for a short period (i.e., 1-2 days) and were found to be COVID-negative:
  - Employees, please consult the current OHR guidelines regarding leave.
  - Students, you do not need a note from your physician, but please notify OSA.
- For COVID-positive/confirmed:
  - Any student, employee, or visitor required to stay at home under [these guidelines](#) shall not return to campus until you have completed the isolation period set forth above and you do not have a fever for more than 24 hours without using fever-reducing medicine. PLEASE DO NOT GET A TEST to determine return to work status.
  - Students do not need a written clearance by a medical provider.
  - Employees must follow standard sick leave policies if they were out for five or more consecutive working days. Please see your human resources representative for assistance.

FYI: What happens when I notify my supervisor or campus official?

- We will always limit the information to those who need to know for human resources purposes, proper safety and cleaning, and determination of the need for notifications or additional testing.
- Human resources, environmental health services, and facilities teams will work with the Department or Program to ensure proper follow-up and cleaning occurs if an employee or student who tested positive was working on-site before showing symptoms.
- Supervisors will remind potentially exposed individuals to maintain strict confidentiality of their COVID-positive co-workers.

- Unless there is a cluster of cases and contact tracing is impossible, we will not send out campus-wide notifications.

## TRAVEL-RELATED QUESTIONS

Question: What if my household member has traveled and cannot self-isolate from the employee?

- Individuals should discuss their circumstances with their supervisor or academic lead for learners. There may be alternative ways to maintain physical separation, monitor symptoms, and/or minimize employee/student contact in the work/study place that could minimize risk to other employees or students.

Before trans-pacific travel:

- Medical students, residents, and clinicians working in facilities with travel-related testing requirements should follow facility protocols. If planning to travel internationally, please look up any country- or jurisdiction-specific requirements or restrictions before booking travel.
- The student or employee should discuss with their supervisor the dates of travel, any implications of isolation requirements on their job functions (or rotation requirements) should they need to isolate and discuss if there is an option to work/learn from home if they become infected with COVID-19 but can work or learn from home (i.e., very mild illness).
  - Medical students, please discuss this with OSA.
  - Graduate Students, please discuss this with your Chair or supervisor.
  - JABSOM Residents/Fellows, please discuss with your Program Director and follow program-specific and hospital-specific protocols regarding returning to work post-travel.
- If the supervisor has questions, they should contact:
  - Dr. Omori for all besides BSB occupants.
  - Dr. Gerschenson for Basic Science students/staff/faculty.
- **Please note that saliva-based tests are not acceptable by JABSOM or the hospitals due to concerns over the quality of sample collection and the sensitivity of the test.**
- **We strongly advise that you wear a KN95/KF94 or N95 (not fit tested) in airports and planes.**

Upon return to O'ahu:

- Please note that our residents and MS3/MS4 students may be required to complete a hospital's pre-travel form or app if required.
- **Although not required for people working or learning in a non-clinical setting, we strongly recommend doing a home test before your return to campus or a clinical rotation. Repeat test on day 5.**
- The traveler and their entire travel party must self-monitor for symptoms of COVID daily for 10 days.



- **DO NOT GO TO school or work if you have any symptoms that could be COVID.**

CLINICAL SETTINGS:

- The returning traveler must follow hospital requirements for daily self-monitoring, screening, and any required post-travel testing.
- Faculty in clinical settings should adhere to the clinical setting policy.
  - For faculty: If there is no set facility policy, but they are working in a very high-risk clinical setting (as in geriatrics), and there is not an option for telework, then the traveler will need to discuss with the Department Chair before the faculty travel.
- Residents/Fellows must follow program-specific and hospital-specific or HRP protocols regarding returning to work post-travel.
- Students on clinical rotations - We follow the policy currently in place for that clinical site.
  - Medical students: If you have a **clinical rotation at a site with a post-travel testing requirement**, and your rotation starts before your COVID test on day 5 after your return, you may have to delay the start of your rotation until after the test has resulted negative. This will vary by facility. Please discuss this with OSA before you travel outside of Hawai'i and schedule your return date with enough buffer.
  - Facilities may require employees, students, residents, and fellows to do testing depending on prevalence, travel patterns, and the rapidly changing issues associated with COVID-19.
  - If the site does not have a policy, then
    - You must self-monitor, wear your proper PPE 100% of the time, and adhere to any physical distancing rules (including not eating/drinking coffee with others) for 10 days following your return from out-of-state travel.
- Persons working in clinical settings who test COVID-positive after travel will require consultation with employee health. The processes vary depending on when you test positive after returning from travel.