Frequently Asked HR Questions Regarding COVID-19
July 29, 2020

Columbia University Irving Medical Center and the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital take the safety and care of our employees and patients very seriously and we thank you for your understanding while we navigate this evolving situation. Please see below for answers to some commonly asked questions about COVID-19.

<u>Staying Informed</u>

How do I get the most recent information on COVID-19 and how it's impacting Columbia University Irving Medical Center? **Please visit the Medical Center's new website for additional details**:

You can check the website at: https://covid19.columbia.edu/news/medical-center-launches-new-site-moving-forward   It provides up to the minute information for our faculty and staff, as well as our patients. We have also set up an email address for you to ask specific questions: covid19questions@cumc.columbia.edu

More information can be found on the CDC website or you can email InfectionPreventionControl@nyp.org. You can also call the NYP COVID-19 Hotline at 646-697-4000.

<u>Travel:</u>

For information about University personal and business travel policies please go to https://covid19.columbia.edu/content/travel

If you are returning from travel visit this web site to determine whether NYS requires a quarantine period: NYS Travel Advisory webpage . Also visit this web site to determine whether you should report to work during the quarantine period **– Exemptions for Essential Workers:**

As always, if you develop symptoms and become ill, stay home and contact your PCP (Primary Care Physician).

What do I do if I have contact with someone outside work who told me they were COVID-19 positive?
If you believe you have been exposed and are concerned, you can call our WHS hotline at 646-NYP-WHS0.

I'm not feeling well. What should I do?

Please remember to stay home if you don't feel well.

COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Whether you have these or other symptoms, if you feel ill, stay home and contact your primary care physician or utilize https://www.columbiadoctors.org/.   Also contact Workforce Health and Safety (WHS) at 646-NYP-WHS0 (646-697-9470). **If you develop symptoms while at work, do not walk into Workforce Health & Safety. Please go home and call WHS at 646-NYP-WHS0 (646-697-9470).**

Do you have any tips for staying healthy at this time?

As a reminder, several preventive actions can help to prevent spread of all respiratory viruses. These actions include:

- Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Maintain six feet of distance between yourself and others when in public.

- Stay home when you are sick

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, rather than into your hands.

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

I am aware of the Workforce Health & Safety Hotline (646-NYP-WHS0). If I call, how will WHS help me? Who will call me back?

Clinical and non-clinical inquiries are being addressed by WHS staff through our COVID-19 Hotline from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. We have staff available to assist with all employee inquiries.

<u>*How can I access Primary and Urgent Care?*</u>

According to the CDC, COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath. **Whether you have these or other symptoms, if you don't feel well, please stay home.** You should also contact your primary care physician or utilize one of our services below. If you are covered under Columbia's UHC medical insurance you can access care using the Columbia Connect Portal

- o If you have a CUIMC physician, and an active portal account you can message them through the Connect portal.
  - o If you do not have a connect account follow these steps so you can take advantage of all of the Connect benefits including video visits with your provider
    - On your computer : Go to https://www.myconnectnyc.org/MyChart/signup
    - From your phone:
      - Download the MyChart app
      - Select "Columbia University Irving Medical Center Connect"
      - Click on "No activation code? (Click Self Sign Up)" and follow the steps to complete the enrollment process
- Many Columbia providers also offer video visits, which are conducted through the Columbia Connect Portal. All you need in addition to a portal account is an iOS or android device. Then download the MyChart App by searching "MyChart" within the App Store or Google Play. Once in the MyChart app, search for "Columbia University Irving Medical Center Connect.
  - o **You will need to call your providers office to schedule a video visit**.

<u>*Paid Time Off*</u>

I am unable to report to work due to school closure, or another family situation related to COVID-19. How will I be paid?

We are offering our full-time and regular part-time employees a one-time allotment of up to 10 paid work days of COVID-Absence, in addition to any other available leave benefits under our existing University policies (including up to 40 hours under the New York City Earned Safe and Sick Time Act). Employees should submit requests for COVID-Absence to their managers. More information is available at **https://humanresources.columbia.edu/news/update-covid-19-temporary-policies-place**

My child's school is closed and I do not have child care. What type of resources are available to me?

Bright Horizons can assist with back-up care. Here are instructions for reserving care:

- With this program, eligible employees can book in-home child or adult care through the Bright Horizons network . To access this service, visit https://worklife.columbia.edu/backupcare.
- For first time registration, use employer username: **columbia|password: Benefits4You** or call 877-BH-CARES (242-2737).
- Starting July 1, 2020, the regular Bright Horizons Back-up Care program will be in place. For eligible employees, back-up care pool of hours resets to 150 hours with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1 (plus 50 additional hours for infants up to one year old).

  Please also note that the back-up care is only for temporary care. Every effort should be made to plan for regular care for the summer.

- **Childcare programs in NYC opened on July 13th.**
- **Summer 2020 Childcare Benefit – please select the link below for instructions:**

  https://humanresources.columbia.edu/content/summer-2020-childcare-benefit-application

Columbia University Shuttle Service:

Summer Schedule for Intercampus Shuttle:
The Intercampus Shuttle summer schedule has changed to add additional service. For the most up to date information go to: https://transportation.columbia.edu/news/additional-intercampus-shuttle-service-beginning-july-13

Fort Lee Shuttle Service:

Will allow for departures from CUIMC and Fort Lee about every 20 minutes instead of the every 40 minute effective 6/22/20. Please visit the Columbia Transportation website for information on the latest schedules and operational changes, including the safety measures implemented in response to COVID-19. We were informed that the closest parking garage is a Municipal Parking Garage located at 298-242 Guntzer Street.

NYP Shuttle Service:

Please note that NYP said that anyone with a CUIMC ID will be permitted to ride on their buses/shuttles until the end of the year. Please refer to the NYP bus schedule

Parking:

We were informed by CUIMC Parking Office that due to the high demand for and limited supply of on-site parking, they cannot fill guest requests at this time. The CUIMC Parking Committee will only approve guest parking for Columbia University Irving Medical Center non-affiliates with a valid chart string. For more information see: **CUIMC Parking**.   **Personal Travel will not be reimbursed.**

There are various private parking facilities located in the vicinity of the Medical Center that offer both daily and monthly parking that may better suit your commuting needs. Please note these parking lots are not affiliated with Columbia.

Will temporary housing be available for COVID-19 care givers:

Those who are interested in exploring free emergency accommodations may be eligible to participate in the City of New York's COVID-19 Hotel Program. Under that Program, the City is providing free hotel stays for eligible healthcare workers and volunteers for up to 28 days (and may be extended). More information on the Program including the application is available via this link: https://www1.nyc.gov/site/helpnownyc/get-help/covid-19-hotel-program.page.

Remote Work/Telecommuting

What are the options relating to being able to work from home?

All University staff who can telecommute should speak to their manager to discuss options to telecommute.

Return to Work

Returning staff will be required to follow all applicable protocols, including COVID testing, training, daily symptom self-check, adherence to *The Columbia Community Health Compact* and any other requirements.

During the phased re-opening of CUIMC buildings, keeping our facilities as safe as possible is a shared responsibility. **All faculty, staff, and students must complete the COVID-19 symptom attestation each day in order to enter any CUIMC building, even if you have been coming into the office since March**

The attestation can be completed one of these two ways:

1. Click here to authenticate through the Columbia Authentication System (CAS) using your UNI and password. You will be prompted to answer a few screening questions indicating whether you have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, have been in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or have tested positive for COVID-19.

2. Download the "**ReopenCU**" application which is available via the Apple App Store on your smart device and complete the assessment. At this time, this application is only available via Apple.

For staff who are unable to complete the attestation prior to coming to campus, kiosks are available in the lobbies of the following CUIMC buildings:

 Allan Rosenfield Building
722 West 168th Street
New York, NY 10032

William Black Building

650 West 168th Street
New York, NY 10032

Russ Berrie Medical Science Pavilion
1150 St. Nicholas Avenue
New York, NY 10032

CUIMC
60 Haven Avenue
New York, NY 10032
Answers to frequently asked questions can be found [here](#).

[Return-to-Work Training](#)

Everyone working on any of our campuses must complete a required online training program**.** For those newly returning to campus, training must be completed before you return. There are two versions of the training:

For Researchers
Researchers, including faculty, staff and students, must take COVID-19 Training: Safe Research at Columbia, TC5550, in RASCAL. **Take the Training**

For Other Columbia Personnel
Other Columbia personnel must take COVID-19 Training: Working Safely at Columbia University, in ELM, the University's Enterprise Learning Management system. This is a general training program that does not include content specific to research. **Take the Training**

Mandatory initial [COVID-19 testing](#) prior to the return to campus on or after July 20. Testing can be scheduled immediately by calling 646-317-1999.
If you have any questions, please reach out to your local HR or central HR Business Partner.

The University has compiled a list of FAQs to provide guidance on the testing process for SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus that causes COVID-19 illness. The FAQs provide information on the testing process, including which groups should be getting tested, how to interpret the test results and what actions to take upon a positive or negative result. **Read the FAQs**

1. All employees are required to wear a cloth face covering, practice social distancing, and make sure that they are aware of and comply with: The Enhanced Health and Safety policy

2. Significant changes were made in anticipation of the return of more people on campus, including measures to promote physical distancing, provide face masks, improve air handling, add new signage and much more. As our planning continues, it will be helpful to have a clearer sense of who will be back and when. **We are asking that, by August 3, each unit develop and submit to CUIMCHR a plan to specifying which groups of administrators (union and non-union) will have some in-person presence on campus, and with what frequency.**

Those who will be required under the plan to come to campus should be given at least three weeks' advance notice, except in limited situations, before they are expected to return. If an administrative staff member is not currently required to come to campus, the earliest the staff member would ordinarily be asked to do so is August 24, three weeks after the preliminary plan date of August 3. In a case where an employee is returning from a state included in the [NY State Travel Advisory](#) or from another country, the employee would be expected to meet the State quarantine requirements during the notice period.

How do I return to work after having COVID-19 Symptoms?

You should not walk in to WHS, but should call the WHS hotline at 646-NYP-WHS0 (646-697-9470) to be screened by WHS to ensure you are free of symptoms. Once screened by WHS and if symptom-free and fever free for 72 hours, you will be cleared over the phone, instructed to return to work and provided with follow up instructions.

CUIMC HR Return to Work Guides:

Both versions of these guides are also posted on the CUIMC Human Resources Website.

RTW Guide for [Staff](#)
RTW Guide for [Managers](#)

CUIMC Facilities Management

CUIMC Facilities Management has created a guideline to support CUIMC's day-to-day operations. Space and Facilities [Guidelines](#)

Testing of COVID-19: Symptom-Free Health Care Personnel

NYP in collaboration with Columbia University Irving Medical Center and Weill Cornell Medicine, is providing testing for COVID-19. Diagnostic PCR/nasopharyngeal (nose) swab testing for COVID-19 is available to faculty and staff **who are symptom-free and have been in contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 or with symptoms of COVID-19, either at work or at home.** The PCR test detects the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19.

Please note that this testing is not recommended for symptom-free HCP who have not been in contact with someone with COVID-19 at work or at home.

How to Access the PCR Test

HCP who believe they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 but are symptom-free should call the Workforce Health and Safety COVID hotline at 646-697-9470 to arrange an appointment for testing. ***Tests will be available <u>only</u> by appointment through Workforce Health and Safety.*** At this time, PCR testing for symptom-free HCP will be available one-time only unless the HCP begins to show symptoms of COVID-19.

At the time of appointment scheduling, it is important for HCP to indicate that they are requesting PCR

testing for symptom-free employees. HCPs presenting to testing sites for their appointment should practice social distancing and wear a protective mask.

HCP who test positive for the virus will be advised to stay home and isolate for seven days from the date of the test (not the date of the results). Results can take from 24-48 hours or longer to turn around.