COVID-19 Protocols – Pre-Clerkship

The College of Medicine leadership, staff, and faculty will continue to work to ensure that all students progress through their program with minimal disruption while adhering to public safety guidelines. The health and safety of patients, students, and faculty is our priority. As developing health professionals, medical students are leaders and role models and as such are expected to exercise responsibility in their personal and professional lives by following all public health, university, and program expectations. Non-compliance with these expectations may result in a meeting regarding professionalism, with associated documentation, and may affect progress in the program.

Clinical Patient Interactions:

- Pre-clerkship students, during clinical learning experiences, will not see any patients or standardized patients who screen positive for COVID-19 symptoms, nor any patients who are probable, or confirmed positive for COVID-19.
- Pre-clerkship students will not shadow on a clinical unit with a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak, nor will clinical learning experiences typically proceed on a unit with a confirmed outbreak.
- Pre-clerkship students will not participate in aerosol-generating medical procedures (AGMPs) or any clinical activities that require an N95 mask.

Patients can be positive for COVID-19 and be asymptomatic or have mild symptoms. It is important that you use PPE and frequently wash your hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Pre-clerkship student involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient has no symptoms of COVID-19 (screen negative)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical settings without a COVID-19 confirmed outbreak</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient has symptoms of COVID-19 or is confirmed + for COVID-19</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 confirmed outbreak unit</td>
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This document provides guidance on protocols to follow related to COVID-19 for University of Saskatchewan medical students in Pre-clerkship. In every instance of suspected symptoms or exposure, students should follow the recommendations for engagement in clinical activities, as given by Public Health and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA).

The Saskatchewan Communicable Disease Manual includes the goals of notification, case definitions, symptoms of the disease, transmission, and treatment. Part of this manual contains the Public Health Management of Contacts Based on Risk table (page 21 of the Manual), which outlines directions for types of contacts and the public health recommendation around it. The Undergraduate Medical Education Program will use this as a guide for time away from program for close contacts. The program will also apply the COVID-19 Return to Work Guide for Health Care Workers for student return to clinical experiences.

The following scenarios will help guide you, should you have questions, concerns, or possible exposure to COVID-19:

**Scenario 1 - What do I do if I experience viral-like symptoms (including, but not limited to cough, sore throat, fever)?**

If you have symptoms of COVID-19, stay home. If you are already on campus or in a clinical setting and start to feel ill, immediately advise your preceptor, leave the session/clinical setting, and go directly home and self-isolate.

a. Stay home and self-isolate, regardless of your vaccination status. When in self-isolation:
   - Do not go to work or school.
   - Do not go to public areas including places of worship, stores, shopping malls and restaurants.
   - Do not have visitors in your home.
   - Cancel or reschedule non-urgent appointments or meet virtually where possible.
   - Do not take public transit.
   - Have family/friends drop off food and necessities or use delivery services.
   - Stay at home and separate from others in the household who are not fully vaccinated if you have symptoms of fever and cough, even if they are mild.
   - Sleep in a room away from others and use a separate bathroom, if possible.
   - It is okay to be outside on your own property, including your backyard or balcony.

b. Do a home rapid antigen test
• If you have a positive home rapid antigen test, then you have COVID-19. Continue to self-isolate. Follow the steps in Scenario 5, below.

• If you have a negative RAT, it does not guarantee that you do not have COVID-19, as RATs have higher false negative rates. Repeat your RAT in 24-48 h. If you continue to have symptoms, even with a negative RAT, you should assume you may have COVID-19 and continue to self-isolate and stay home from campus.

• Returning to on-campus activities – If your RAT remains negative, remain away from on-campus activities until you are symptom-free for 48h, following the University guidelines. You must have a negative RAT on the day of return to any in-person clinical sessions in the CLRC or RLC.

• Returning to clinical sessions in the in SHA wards, clinics, physicians’ offices or community placements – Due to the risk of transmission to potentially vulnerable patients and to avoid transmission within health care settings, for these types of sessions the Return to work Guidelines for SHA Health Care Workers must be followed. If you have an upcoming session in a clinical setting, call 811, advising them that you are a health care worker (health sciences student on a clinical placement) to request a PCR test. Follow the Return to Work Guidelines for SHA Health Care Workers for timing of return to program (see table on the second page). Note that Day Zero is the day that you first developed symptoms.

c. Contact the appropriate UGME administrative staff (see Notification of symptoms/need to be absent list) to inform them of the situation and your need to self-isolate. If you feel you need additional support, please advise the UGME office so they can connect you with the Office of Student Affairs.

d. Work with administrator and year chair to schedule missed learning opportunities following the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy.

e. If you are confirmed + for COVID-19 with a + RAT or PCR test, we recommend you inform your close contacts (anyone you were in close contact with, without appropriate PPE, in the 48 h prior to developing symptoms or testing positive). The UGME office has an obligation to notify those who may have been in contact with you in a small group setting or a large classroom. A de-identified notification will be sent out. If you prefer to notify students or faculty whom you have encountered in small group learning settings directly yourself, please advise your UGME administrative coordinator. Please note that we must notify standardized patients and CLRC staff through the CLRC as their contact information is private and will do so in a de-identified way.

f. Please contact UGME and/or OSA if you need any support or have questions.
g. The Associate Dean, UGME is informed to ensure ongoing monitoring of case numbers in the program. UGME report de-identified information on exposures and test results to University of Saskatchewan Safety Resources to support university tracking of trends in exposures and cases.

**Notification of symptoms/need to be absent:**
- the UGME office administrator at your site.
  - note that the UGME office administrator may need to consult with Year Chair/Associate Dean or Program Manager on appropriate guidance.
  - UGME office administrator will notify OSA if you request.

**Notification of test results:**
- the UGME office administrator at your site

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**Scenario 2 - What do I do if I am in contact with someone with viral-like symptoms but I do not know if they are COVID positive?**

If you were in close proximity to the individual, self-monitor for **symptoms**.

If you develop viral-like symptoms, follow steps in Scenario 1.

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**Scenario 3 - What do I do if come into contact with someone who is COVID positive* during a clinical or classroom learning experience?**

*An individual who has either a positive PCR test or a positive rapid antigen test is considered to be COVID positive.

a. If you have any **symptoms** of COVID-19, follow steps in Scenario 1.

b. If you do **not** have any symptoms of COVID-19, determine risk level of exposure:

   Whether or not you need to self-isolate will depend on the risk of the contact based on your vaccination status, proximity to the individual and mitigating factors. Refer to the [Risk Classification for Asymptomatic HCWs with Potential Exposure](#) and follow recommendations there. If you are unsure of your risk, please consult your Year Chair and appropriate UGME Admin Staff or call 811.

   - If you are fully vaccinated, you will be considered to have a low-risk exposure/non-close contact. **Self-monitor** for 14 days following your last exposure to the case. Avoid close contact with individuals at high risk for illness during the self-monitoring period. If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, self-isolate immediately and follow the steps in Scenario 1. We recommend you also do home rapid antigen testing regularly at least every 3 days for 10 days, including the day of any in-person clinical learning session. See the [Health Care Worker Return to Work Guide](#) for more details.

   - If you are not fully vaccinated, whether you are required to self-isolate will depend on whether the contact is considered high risk/close contact. Contact ugme.exposure@usask.ca for advice including reporting to SHA OH&S and completing a Usask incident report.
• Any advice from Public Health/OH&S contact tracers should be followed and supersedes this guidance.

Scenario 4 - What do I do if come into contact with someone who is COVID positive* outside of a learning setting?

* An individual who has either a positive PCR test or a positive rapid antigen test is considered to be COVID positive.

Follow all the steps outlined in Scenario 3. If you are fully vaccinated, this will not be considered a high-risk exposure.

Scenario 5 - What do I do if I, or someone in my household, has a positive Home Rapid Antigen test?

Home rapid antigen testing (such as the SHA Test to Protect program) is designed for screening for COVID-19 in asymptomatic people, but can also be used in the event of symptoms, if a PCR test is not readily available.

Antigen testing has high specificity (if you have a positive screening test you likely have COVID) but it does not have as high a sensitivity as a PCR test (a negative test does not exclude you having COVID). If you have symptoms that might be COVID-19, follow steps in Section 1.

If someone in your household has a positive home rapid antigen test, consider them to be COVID positive – see Scenario 4. Your household member with COVID-19 should self-isolate away from other members of the household. You may continue to attend work/school but should self-monitor closely for symptoms. If you develop symptoms, see scenario 1.

If you have a positive home rapid antigen test, consider yourself to be COVID positive. Please do the following:

a. Stay home and self-isolate:
   o Do not go to work or school.
   o Do not go to public areas including places of worship, stores, shopping malls and restaurants.
   o Do not have visitors in your home.
   o Cancel or reschedule non-urgent appointments or meet virtually where possible.
   o Do not take public transit.
   o Have family/friends drop off food and necessities or use delivery services.
   o Stay at home and separate from others in the household who are not fully vaccinated if you have symptoms of fever and cough, even if they are mild.
   o Sleep in a room away from others and use a separate bathroom, if possible.
   o It is okay to be outside on your own property, including your backyard or balcony.
b. **Returning to on-campus activities** – Following the university guidelines, stay home and self-isolate for 5 days from the date of your test result, or until 48 hours after your symptoms resolve or significantly improve, whichever comes later. You may return to campus on day 6. You must have a negative RAT on the day of return to any in-person clinical sessions in the CLRC or RLC. Note that Day zero was the day you had the positive RAT.

c. **Returning to clinical sessions in the in SHA wards, clinics, physicians’ offices or community placements** – Due to the risk of transmission to potentially vulnerable patients and to avoid transmission within health care settings, for these types of sessions the [Return to work Guidelines for SHA Health Care Workers](https://example.com) must be followed. Follow the [Return to Work Guidelines for SHA Health Care Workers](https://example.com) for timing of return to program (see table on the second page). Note that Day Zero is the day that you had your positive RAT.

d. Contact the [appropriate UGME administrative staff](https://example.com) (see Notification of Test Results list) to inform them of the situation and your need to self-isolate. If you feel you need additional support, please advise the UGME office so they can connect you with the Office of Student Affairs. Work with administrator and year chair to schedule missed learning opportunities following [the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy](https://example.com).

e. We recommend you inform your close contacts (anyone you were in close contact with, without appropriate PPE, in the 48 h prior to developing symptoms or testing positive). The UGME office has an obligation to notify those who may have been in contact with you in a small group setting or a large classroom. A de-identified notification will be sent out. If you prefer to notify students or faculty whom you have encountered in small group learning settings directly yourself, please advise your UGME administrative coordinator. Please note that we must notify standardized patients and CLRC staff through the CLRC as their contact information is private and will do so in a de-identified way.

f. Please contact UGME and/or OSA if you need any support or have questions.

g. Associate Dean, UGME is informed to ensure ongoing review of exposure incidents. UGME reports de-identified information on exposures and test results to University of Saskatchewan Safety Resources to support university tracking of trends in exposures and cases.

- **Notification of test results:**
  - the UGME office administrator at your sit.
    - note that the UGME office administrator may need to consult with Year Chair/Associate Dean or Program Manager on appropriate guidance
    - UGME office administrator will notify OSA if you request
Some pre-clerkship learning (e.g., DSPEs in Clinical Skills courses) may occur in SHA facilities. The SHA outbreak management guidelines can be found here; section 5.8.8 is relevant to College of Medicine learners. In the event that a clinical learning session is scheduled on a confirmed outbreak unit, the session will typically be cancelled or rescheduled. Course leadership will make that decision in collaboration with UGME leadership depending on the nature of the session, and on rare occasions the session may proceed. Students will be informed if a session needs to be cancelled or rescheduled due to an outbreak.

Shadowing cannot take place on a clinical unit where there is a COVID-19 confirmed outbreak, to reduce transmission risk and to avoid unnecessary testing. A full list of outbreak units is available here; please check that list prior to shadowing to ensure you will not be on an outbreak unit. If in doubt, contact your clinical supervisor for your shadowing or your Year Chair/Coordinator.

Contingency plan for missed learning if self-isolation is required:

- If learning cannot take place virtually – apply sick time from the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy.
- If learning can be participated in virtually – student may not require rescheduling, depending on whether objectives of the learning experience can be met and whether the learning experience can be replicated or not.

All plans will be developed with the student by the UGME administrative staff in consultation with Year Chair and relevant Course/Module Director.

If you have specific needs and would like to explore accommodation of these needs, please reach out to the Office of Student Affairs for support in bringing forward any accommodation requests. If you have any questions, please contact your Year Chair/Year Site Coordinator (information below), Dr. Malin or McKague, and we will be happy to answer them. You are also welcome to direct questions through your class reps.

In all learning activities, please consistently take the following steps to keep yourself, and everyone else, as safe as possible:

- Do home rapid antigen testing regularly, including (for pre-clerkship students) before each in-person clinical session
- Follow continuous masking guidelines and all PPE recommendations for the unit you are on: PPE guidelines
- If you are using PPE, regularly review techniques for donning and doffing it properly
- Maintain exceptional hand hygiene
- Be safe on breaks:
  - follow breakroom guidelines which includes physical distancing and not sharing food
- In meeting or seminar rooms, always:
  - Maintain a minimum 2m distance between each person, especially if in the vicinity of anyone unmasked to eat or drink
  - Remain masked - masks should only be removed if eating or drinking, and then a 2m distance must be maintained
- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, even very mild, please stay home and self-isolate
- If you start to experience symptoms while at school/in a clinical setting, tell your supervisor, go directly home and self-isolate

Program Contacts:

List of Year and Site Chairs & Program Director:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Co-Chair</th>
<th>Dr. Nicole Shedden and Dr. Jennifer Chlan-Fourney</th>
<th>Saskatoon</th>
<th><a href="mailto:nks904@usask.ca">nks904@usask.ca</a>, <a href="mailto:jen.chlan@usask.ca">jen.chlan@usask.ca</a></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 Chair</td>
<td>Dr. Jacqueline Kraushaar</td>
<td>Regina</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jacqueline.kraushaar@usask.ca">jacqueline.kraushaar@usask.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2 Site Coordinator</td>
<td>Dr. Schaana Van de Kamp</td>
<td>Saskatoon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:schaana.v@usask.ca">schaana.v@usask.ca</a></td>
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Please see the list of UGME Pre-Clerkship Administrative Staff to contact at your home site below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saskatoon</td>
<td>Cheryl Pfeifer</td>
<td>Principles &amp; Foundations</td>
<td>year 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cheryl.pfeifer@usask.ca">cheryl.pfeifer@usask.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sonja MacDonald</td>
<td>Medicine &amp; Society, Clinical Skills, Clinical Integration</td>
<td>year 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sonja.macdonald@usask.ca">sonja.macdonald@usask.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamara Hominuke</td>
<td>Success in Medical</td>
<td>all years</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tamara.hominuke@usask.ca">tamara.hominuke@usask.ca</a></td>
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Update: March 30, 2022
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<th>Courses</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Regina</td>
<td>Cassie Eskra</td>
<td>All courses</td>
<td>year 2</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Cassandra.Eskra@saskhealthauthority.ca">Cassandra.Eskra@saskhealthauthority.ca</a></td>
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## Pre-clerkship COVID-19 Protocols – Change History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 6, 2020</td>
<td>Pre-Clerkship COVID-19 protocols developed and posted to website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 10, 2020</td>
<td>Staff/Faculty contacts updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 13, 2021</td>
<td>Link to SHA document “Risk Classification for Asymptomatic HCWs with Potential Exposure” updated due to update to SHA document and link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 8, 2021</td>
<td>Addition of new section related to procedure if a student is scheduled or participating in a learning experience on a clinical unit where there is a COVID-19 outbreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 12, 2021</td>
<td>Update for Academic Session 2021-2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27, 2021</td>
<td>Addition of section on exposures outside of learning setting Addition of section on rapid antigen home testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8, 2021</td>
<td>Update to section 6 - Outbreak units; addition of graphic for clinical patient interactions; additional of general safety steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6, 2021</td>
<td>Formatting changes to improve readability, links updated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 5, 2022</td>
<td>Updates to testing and self-isolation information based on revised public health regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21, 2022</td>
<td>New guidance on what to do if unable to access a PCR test in a timely way, SHA link updates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28, 2022</td>
<td>Updates based on changes to provincial, SHA, and University testing and self-isolation/return to work policies, incorporation of RAT as a testing strategy if symptomatic</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2, 2022</td>
<td>Incorporates updated (Mar 1, 2022) SHA Return to Work Guidelines for Health Care Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 30, 2022</td>
<td>Updated SHA links</td>
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