





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 personal responsibility in their personal and professional lives by following all [Public Health COVID-19](#) related orders. Non-compliance with these health orders 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, suspect,](#) 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.

Situation	Pre-clerkship student involvement
Patient has no symptoms of COVID-19 (screen negative)	
Clinical settings without a COVID-19 confirmed outbreak	
Patient has symptoms of COVID-19 or is confirmed + for COVID-19	
COVID-19 confirmed outbreak unit	

Procedure requires an N95 mask	
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The purpose of this document is to provide guidance about protocols to follow related to COVID-19 for [University of Saskatchewan](#) medical students in Pre-clerkship. Much or all of this information, *including the [self-assessment tool](#)* is on the Government of Saskatchewan website for [COVID-19](#). In every instance of suspected symptoms or exposure, students should follow the recommendations for engagement in clinical activities, as given by Public Health, via the 811 Healthline.

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, which outlines directions for types of contacts and the public health recommendation around it. The Undergraduate Medical Program will use this as a guide for time away from program, based on individualized advice provided by Public Health. The program will also apply the [COVID-19 Return to Work Guide for Health Care Workers](#) for student return to clinical experiences.

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

When you complete the [Self-Assessment tool](#) you will likely be advised to not to attend in-person sessions (such as ACB lab, Clinical Skills, DSPE, Shadowing, Community Experience, PREP). Even though you may be partially or completely vaccinated for COVID-19, please adhere to this regulation and stay home and [self-isolate](#). If you are already at a learning session and start to feel ill, immediately advise your preceptor, leave the session and go directly home and self-isolate. Please contact the [appropriate UGME administrative staff](#) to inform them of the situation and contact the 811 Healthline for more specific guidance about next steps.

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, it would be better to exercise caution and engage in self-monitoring for symptoms and your return to activities would depend on the risk level of proximity and mitigating factors (PPE, vaccination, etc.). Refer to the [Contacts Definitions](#) (Table 5, page 21) and the [Public Health Management of Contacts Based on Risk](#) table (Table 6, page 26) and follow recommendations there. If you are unsure, please consult your Year Chair and appropriate UGME Admin Staff or call 811.

If you are self-monitoring and you develop viral-like symptoms (as above), then you should stay home, self-isolate, [notify the appropriate UGME admin](#), and contact the 811 HealthLine. During this time if you are feeling well enough, you will be able to participate in all virtual learning that does not have in-person interactions.

3. What do I do if come into contact with someone who is COVID positive during a clinical or classroom learning experience (large or small group e.g., Clinical Skills, DSPE, Shadowing, Community Experience, PREP)?

Please refer to the [Medical Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazard Policy](#) and follow the [COVID-19](#) Procedure.

- a. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, follow steps in Section 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 have had 2 COVID-19 vaccinations with the most recent at least 14 days prior) 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 symptom, self-isolate immediately and call 811.
 - 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.
 - Any advice from Public Health/OH&S contact tracers should be followed and supersedes this guidance.

The following steps apply **if determined that the [risk level](#) is high:**

- c. Immediately leave clinical setting and call 811 Healthline and indicate you are a healthcare worker and have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19, and [self isolate](#) unless advised otherwise by Public Health or OH&S. Follow advice for [self-isolation](#) and timeline for possible return to clinical duties. Notify the relevant individuals in the [Notification of exposure](#) list (include all below). You may notify UGME Administrator via the [application for absence](#). Please advise if UGME office many notify Office of Student Affairs so they can reach out to you for support.
- d. Contact your local Incident Reporting Line to report your incident as a COVID-19 exposure:
 - Saskatoon Health: 306-655-0820
 - Rural (Toll-Free): 1-866-966-0820
 - Prince Albert: 306-765-6452 or 306-765-6497
 - Regina: Regina General Hospital: 306-766-4689 or 306-766-4431
 - Wascana Rehabilitation Centre: 306-766-5217
 - Pasqua Hospital: 306-766-2557 or 306-766-2518
- e. Complete the [University of Saskatchewan Incident Report form](#) Submit to the ugme.exposure@usask.ca.
- f. [Notification of test results](#) list (include all below) and the recommendations from public health on return to clinical duties. Work with year chair to schedule missed learning opportunities, following [the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy](#).

- g. Student will be contacted by UGME and appropriate Year Chair to provide support and follow up.
- h. 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 exposure:

- the UGME office administrator at his or her 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 provide permission.
- relevant supervising physician/administrative staff e.g., if on a clinical placement such as shadowing, community Experience or PREP.

Notification of test results:

- the UGME office administrator at his or her site.
- relevant supervising physician/administrative staff e.g., if on a clinical placement such as Community Experience or PREP.

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](#).

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

- a. If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, follow steps in Section 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 [Contacts Definitions](#) (Table 5, page 21) and the [Public Health Management of Contacts Based on Risk](#) table (Table 6, page 26) 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 have had 2 COVID-19 vaccinations with the most recent at least 14 days prior) 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 symptom, self-isolate immediately and call 811.

- 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. If a close contact/high risk, [self-isolate](#) at home for 14 days from last exposure > call 811 to arrange testing (identify yourself as a contact of a case) > continue to self-isolate for the full 14 days even if your test is negative> if you develop any symptoms call 811.
- Any advice from Public Health should be followed and supersedes this guidance.

The following steps apply **if determined that the [risk level](#) is high:**

- c. Notify the [UGME program of your need to be absent](#) to self-isolate and that you are seeking testing (see **Notification of Exposure** below). Please advise if UGME office many notify Office of Student Affairs so they can reach out to you for support.
- d. Once you have test results, notify the UGME program (see **Notification of Test Results**, below) and advise your administrator of the recommendations from public health on return to learning activities. Work with administrator and year chair to schedule missed learning opportunities, following [the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy](#).
- e. Student will be contacted by UGME to provide support and follow up. OSA may also provide support and follow-up.

Notification of exposure:

- 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 provide permission.

Notification of test results:

- the UGME office administrator at your site.

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](#).

5. What do I do if I, or anyone 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.

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

If you OR anyone in your household has a positive home rapid antigen test, you must do the following:

- a. Stay home and [self-isolate](#), despite being partially or completely vaccinated for COVID-19.
- b. Call 811 to arrange for a PCR test (diagnostic test) for COVID-19. When you call, advise that you are a health care worker and have a positive antigen test (or family member has a positive antigen test).
- c. Contact the [appropriate UGME administrative staff](#) (see **Notification of + home antigen test**) to inform them of the situation and your need to self-isolate. Please advise if UGME office many notify Office of Student Affairs so they can reach out to you for support.
- d. Continue to self-isolate until you receive your COVID-19 PCR test result.
- e. Once you have PCR test results, notify the UGME program (see **Notification of Test Results** below) and advise your administrator of the recommendations from public health on return to learning activities. Work with administrator and year chair to schedule missed learning opportunities, following [the Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence Policy](#).
- f. Student will be contacted by UGME to provide support and follow up. OSA may also provide support and follow-up.
- g. Associate Dean, UGME is informed to ensure ongoing review of exposure incidents.

Notification of + home antigen test:

- 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 provide permission.

Notification of test results:

- the UGME office administrator at your site

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](#).

6. What if I am scheduled for a learning experience on a clinical unit where there is a COVID-19 Outbreak?

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 (page 12) 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.

7. How can I keep myself, and others, as safe as possible?

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

- Daily Fitness for Work screening:
 - Do the [Daily Fitness for Work screening](#) before each 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 or holding potlucks
- 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, self-isolate, and call 811 to arrange testing.**
- **If you start to experience symptoms while at school/in a clinical setting, tell your supervisor, go directly home, self-isolate, and call 811 to arrange testing.**

Program Contacts:

List of Year and Site Chairs & Program Director:

Year 1 Co-Chair	Dr. Nicole Shedden and Dr. Jennifer Chlan-Fourney	Saskatoon	nks904@usask.ca , jen.chlan@usask.ca
Year 2 Chair	Dr. Jacqueline Kraushaar	Regina	jacqueline.kraushaar@usask.ca
Year 2 Site Coordinator	Dr. Schaana Van de Kamp	Saskatoon	schaana.v@usask.ca

Please see the list of UGME Pre-Clerkship Administrative Staff to contact at your home site below.

Site	Name	Course	Year	email
Saskatoon	Cheryl Pfeifer	Principles & Foundations	year 1 & 2 year 1 & 2	cheryl.pfeifer@usask.ca
	Sonja MacDonald	Medicine & Society, Clinical Skills, Clinical Integration	year 1 & 2	sonja.macdonald@usask.ca
	Tamara Hominuke	Success in Medical School I-IV, OSCE	all years	tamara.hominuke@usask.ca
Regina	Cassie Eskra	All courses	year 2	Cassandra.Eskra@saskhealthauthority.ca

Pre-clerkship COVID-19 Protocols – Change History

Date	Change
October 6, 2020	Pre-Clerkship COVID-19 protocols developed and posted to website
December 10, 2020	Staff/Faculty contacts updated
January 13, 2021	Link to SHA document “Risk Classification for Asymptomatic HCWs with Potential Exposure” updated due to update to SHA document and link
February 8, 2021	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
July 12, 2021	Update for Academic Session 2021-2022
Sept 27, 2021	Addition of section on exposures outside of learning setting

	Addition of section on rapid antigen home testing
Oct 8, 2021	Update to section 6 - Outbreak units; addition of graphic for clinical patient interactions; additional of general safety steps