

December 18, 2020

Dear Washington University faculty, staff, post-docs, fellows, residents and students:

We want to make you aware of a few changes in testing for COVID-19:

1. **Diagnostic testing:** As the winter months have descended, we have begun testing symptomatic individuals for both COVID and Influenza. This will occur automatically when you call the COVID call center at 314-362-5056. If you have recently had COVID, you will only be tested for Influenza. This is because the COVID PCR tests we use can remain positive for up to 4 months from initial infection even though there is no evidence of ongoing spread of disease after 10 days in immunocompetent individuals. This is also why we do not re-test people before allowing them back at work.
2. **Exposure testing:** Earlier this month we implemented optional exposure testing for all our employees and students. We test on day 5-7 after exposure because this is when you are most likely to convert. Importantly, a negative result does not change the duration of quarantine per local public health orders. If you test positive and are asymptomatic, you will be isolated for 10 days from the time of the positive test. If you believe you have been exposed, call the call center at 314-362-5056. See [here](#) for more information about what classifies as an exposure.
3. **On demand and family testing:** We have had a large number of requests for access to the saliva test for personal use (such as pre-travel or family visit) or for use by families for either symptomatic or asymptomatic testing. Effective immediately, the 1234 Kingshighway site will be made available to all Wash U employees, students and family members for this purpose for a cost of \$50 per test (which covers the operational costs of the test — there is no profit). It is very important to recognize the many [limitations](#) of asymptomatic testing. Asymptomatic testing is not reimbursable by insurance but you can submit your receipt to your flexible spending account. EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS SHOULD NOT USE THIS TESTING FOR SYMPTOMATIC OR EXPOSURE TESTING. You can schedule this testing [here](#). Please note that this is available only as long as testing capacity is adequate for occupational health, student health and patient care uses.

Sincerely,

Eva M. Aagaard, MD
Interim Senior Administrator for Occupational Health