

Testing, tracing and the metrics that matter: Our plan

As the U begins fall semester, the health and well-being of students, staff and faculty are top priorities for the university. A team led by public health experts at U of U Health has developed a plan to test, trace, and monitor campus for cases of COVID-19, as addressed in the FAQ below.

The evolving nature of the pandemic and the university's focus on reducing risk to the extent possible means that university operations must be flexible, nimble, and informed by public health, state, and federal guidance. The U's health experts and administrative leaders are tracking a number of indicators to gauge impact of COVID-19 on campus as well as in the community. Some of the most important metrics are the following:

- Weekly number of new COVID-19 cases on campus and in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, and the state of Utah
- Stress on our hospitals measured by in-patient and ICU bed capacity
- Testing and contact tracing capacity
- Quarantine and isolation capacity for students living in on-campus residence halls
- Impact of COVID-19 on our campus workforce

These metrics will inform senior leaders' decisions about campus operations. The university also is working on a system to monitor wastewater, which U researchers have shown can serve as an early indicator of a coronavirus outbreak.

Here are details about the U's plan to test and track coronavirus, which may be adapted throughout Fall 2020 as/if new procedures or methods are validated and become available at the U.

In what circumstances is the U performing tests to screen for COVID-19?

The U will require and perform an initial test of all students who will reside in residence halls upon their arrival in August.

Where will testing of students who will live on campus take place?

Students living in residence halls will be tested at the Officers Club in Fort Douglas, located on campus, during move-in.

What about testing of other campus community members?

The U is asking anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or who has had recent close contact with a known COVID-19 case to stay home and get a coronavirus test. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, chills, new or worsening chronic cough, runny nose, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, or difficulty breathing/shortness of breath.

Campus community members—students living off campus, staff and faculty—can call 801-587-0712 for help determining if they need to be tested. They will be directed to their existing health care provider or a community testing site as necessary, based on symptoms of COVID-19.

Beginning Aug. 24, the U also will have an on-campus student testing center that will be available as an additional resource to perform tests for students who are symptomatic or have a referral based on contact tracing.

Who pays for the tests?

The university is covering the cost of an initial test for students moving into residence halls. Subsequent tests, as well as tests for non-residential students, staff, and faculty should be submitted to each individual's health insurance provider.

How long will take for test results to come back?

The timeframe for test results to be returned is 24 to 96 hours.

How are positive tests recorded?

Students living in residence halls have completed a consent form that allows test results to be shared with Housing & Residential Education (HRE). In the event of a positive test, HRE will notify the student by telephone and engage contact tracing protocols. Negative results will be sent by email.

Students living in HRE facilities who test positive for COVID-19 should [complete this self-report form](#).

All other students and staff and faculty are asked to self-report all COVID-19 tests [using this form](#), which will help the U track case counts, conduct contact tracing and enact cleaning protocols for affected campus spaces.

Will HRE test students living in residence halls again if they subsequently develop COVID-19 symptoms?

Students living in residence halls will be asked to isolate in rooms set aside for this purpose if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. They will be required to get a new test, which should be submitted to the student's health insurance provider.

Does the U expect students, staff and faculty to quarantine until they receive test results?

Students living in residence halls will not have to quarantine while awaiting initial test results, though HRE staff will encourage them to limit their activities and engagement with others until the results are back.

Students living in residence halls who are tested a second time due to symptoms or contact with others who have tested positive for COVID-19 will quarantine.

Other students, staff and faculty who seek a test based on symptoms of COVID-19 are asked to quarantine while awaiting results.

Is the U conducting contact tracing?

Yes. Upon receiving a positive test report, trained interviewers employed by U of U Health will work with the individual who is positive for COVID-19 to build a contact list. The interviewers will then reach out to individuals who have potentially been exposed to the virus and ask them to get a coronavirus test and quarantine.

Where will people who have possibly been exposed to coronavirus be tested?

Faculty, staff and students who are informed they may have been exposed to coronavirus will be directed to contact their primary health care provider for a test. Students may also be directed to the on-campus student testing center, which is in the process of being set up. HRE staff are supporting these efforts for students who live in residence halls.

All campus community members should quarantine while awaiting test results.

I think I have symptoms of COVID-19. Who can I reach out to for advice and guidance?

The university has established the Health and Testing Questions Hotline to answer questions about symptoms, testing and contact tracing of COVID-19. That number is 801-587-0712. Other questions related to COVID-19 impacts on campus operations may be directed to the General Campus Questions Hotline at 801-213-2874.