



UNL GUIDANCE FOR UNIT LEADERS, SUPERVISORS, INSTRUCTORS, AND STUDENT SUPPORT STAFF:

## How to Respond to an Employee or Student Who Notifies of COVID-19 Symptoms, Exposure, or Lab-Confirmed Diagnosis

This guidance is meant to provide unit leaders, supervisors, instructors, and student support staff with information about how best to have conversations with UNL faculty, staff, and students who provide notification of COVID-19 symptoms, exposure, or lab-confirmed diagnosis. The guidance details how notifications at the unit level ideally fit within UNL-wide contact tracing and notification procedures. Each section includes template messages that may be used in responding to the different types of notifications that could occur.

### SCENARIO 1: SYMPTOMS, NOT YET TESTED FOR COVID-19

#### If a faculty or staff member or student on campus reports symptoms of COVID-19, but has not had a laboratory COVID-19 test:

Symptoms include:

One of the following:

- Fever over 100.4 degrees
- Onset of shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New onset of dry cough
- New onset of loss of taste or smell

And/or 2 or more of the following prolonged for >24 hours and unexplained:

- Chills longer than two hours
- Congestion and/or runny nose
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle pain

Any individual experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 should self-quarantine and contact their primary care physician or the University Health Center to determine whether to seek a COVID-19 test, and for additional care instructions. A medical provider can help determine whether symptoms may be due to a cause besides COVID-19, such as influenza or bacterial pneumonia. The individual should self-quarantine until further guidance from a medical provider. If a COVID-19 test is recommended, self-quarantine should continue before the test, after the test while awaiting results, and for as long as recommended by a medical provider after the test result is known.

COVID-19 tests are readily available for UNL faculty, staff and students at no cost at the UNL on-campus COVID-19 test site on weekday afternoons. Pre-registration is required—register [here](#). For those with symptoms, contacting a medical provider to determine if and when to seek a COVID-19 test is recommended but is not required to sign up for no-cost on-campus COVID-19 testing. Testing is also available at the University Health Center weekdays and Saturday mornings; payment may be required. An appointment or telehealth consultation is required prior to testing at the University Health Center.

Individuals with symptoms and awaiting consultation with a medical provider, or awaiting a COVID-19 test result, should notify those who live with them that they are self-quarantining. They should avoid close contact with others, including those with whom they live, until further guidance from a medical provider.

A faculty or staff member or student who is self-quarantining is strongly encouraged to notify their supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know the individual will miss some in-person work or school, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly. Students living in University Housing are asked to self-report their quarantine via a Web form at <https://go.unl.edu/quarantine> to ensure staff are aware and students may receive quarantine instructions.

## Scenario 1 Messaging: Symptoms, Not Yet Tested for COVID-19

### Message to Those with Symptoms:

Thank you for sharing the symptoms that you are experiencing. I hope you feel better soon.

Here is what I recommend based on the information you shared:

1. Contact your primary doctor or the [University Health Center](#) to determine if and when to seek a COVID-19 test, and for additional care instructions. A medical provider can help determine whether symptoms may be due to a cause besides COVID-19.

COVID-19 testing is readily available for UNL faculty, staff and students at no cost at the UNL on-campus [COVID-19 test site](#) on weekday afternoons. It is recommended but not required that you consult a medical provider prior to registering for a test at this site. Testing is also available at the [University Health Center](#) weekdays and Saturday mornings; payment may be required at the Health Center.

2. Self-quarantine until you are able to reach a medical provider for further guidance or until you obtain a test and receive the test results.

a. Self-quarantine should continue before the test, after the test while awaiting results, and for as long as recommended by a medical provider after the test result is known. Individuals in self-quarantine should separate themselves from others, including not going to in-person classes, work, or social/religious gatherings.

b. You should notify those who you live with that you are self-quarantining. You should avoid close contact with others, including those who you live with, until further guidance from a medical provider. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or longer.

c. You should notify your supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know you will miss any in-person work or school during your self-quarantine, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly.

d. If you are a student living in University Housing, you should self-report your quarantine via a Web form at <https://go.unl.edu/quarantine> so staff are aware and you may receive quarantine instructions.

e. If you receive a positive result indicating a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19, please notify the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865, or feel free to let me know if you'd like my help notifying that team. This is so the public health advocates can help confidentially notify your close contacts in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our campus community.

## SCENARIO 2: LAB-CONFIRMED/POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

### If a faculty or staff member or student on campus has a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19/tests positive for COVID-19:

**The individual should follow the advice of the individual's medical provider and the local health department or the Department of Health and Human Services.** The information below offers some minimum guidance at the time of writing this document; however, the individual's medical provider and the local health department will offer the most up to date guidance tailored to each individual case.

At a minimum, the individual will need to **self-isolate, as defined below, for at least 10 days after symptoms began, or after the positive COVID-19 test (if asymptomatic). In addition to the minimum 10-day isolation, the individual's fever should have been resolved without medications for at least 24 hours and any COVID-19 symptoms should have been getting better for at least 3 days before leaving isolation.** In most cases, a repeat COVID-19 test is not necessary to stop home isolation.

All others who had close contact with the individual must **self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days after the last close contact with the individual, seek the advice of a medical provider to confirm the need to obtain a COVID-19 test, and self-monitor** for symptoms of COVID-19. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or longer in the 2 days before symptoms appeared or 2 days before specimen collection that led to a positive test result (if asymptomatic). Close contacts include anyone living with the infected person.

All **students** who test positive for COVID-19 are urged to **report their confirmed case to the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team** at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865. A **faculty or staff member or student worker** who tests positive for COVID-19 is urged to **report their confirmed case to (a) the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team** at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865, and (b) **their supervisor**. The Public Health Advocacy Team consists of a small team of UNL staff designated to work with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department to coordinate contact tracing that involves the UNL community. The UNL Public Health Advocacy Team is also available as a resource to help faculty, staff and students with a confirmed case of COVID-19 to navigate school and work.

A student who is self-isolating should notify their instructor(s) to make any arrangements related to course activities they will miss, including in-person classes.

**Campus supervisors, instructors, and student support staff** who are notified by a UNL faculty or staff member or student that such person has a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 should also **report the confirmed case to the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team** at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865. Multiple individuals reporting on the same case is fine and encouraged to ensure the most complete reporting possible.

**Campus supervisors, instructors, and student support staff who learn of a positive COVID-19 case should NOT notify anyone besides the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team of the community member's positive status.** This includes not notifying others that may share a workplace, classroom, or living environment with the individual who tested positive. Making such notifications is the work of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department and the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team, who will ensure those members of the UNL community deemed close contacts of the individual with confirmed COVID-19 are notified as soon as possible. This could be the instructor and other students in a class the student attended (if the student was in close contact with others in the class); most classrooms are set up so close contact does not occur. This could also be the entire on-campus housing building where a student lives, the laboratory or office where someone is working, or other communities on campus that likely had interactions with the individual, such as in campus recreation facilities, all on a case-by-case basis. Because the Forward to Fall framework has led to significant changes in the way people are physically distanced and required to wear face coverings on campus, campus-wide notices for COVID-positive cases will likely not be needed.

It is very important that the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team in coordination with the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department make notifications to close contacts of individuals who test positive, rather than unit heads, supervisors, instructors or other members of the UNL community making such notifications. This is to ensure careful adherence to legal requirements related to such disclosures.

When the Public Health Advocacy Team makes notices to the University community, attention will be given to the individual's right to privacy, although such rights are typically more limited during a national health emergency. Notices related to employees will be limited to those who need to know and will convey only as much information as necessary to inform those who need to know. In most cases, the identity of the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 need not be made known.

Students remain protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, certain disclosures within the community of campus employees of non-directory information about a student is allowable under the school official exception on a need to know basis. For example, a supervisor alerting the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team of a positive student worker case is allowable. Additionally, there is a limited emergency exception that allows disclosure of some non-directory information about a student to a third party so long as there is an articulable and significant threat that requires such disclosure and the disclosure is made to "appropriate parties" (such as public health officials and recent close contacts of the individual) whose knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. When the University makes a disclosure under the health or safety emergency provision in FERPA, the University is specifically required to record the articulable and significant threat to the health or safety of a student or other individual that formed the basis for the disclosure and the parties to whom the agency or institution disclosed the information. For example, the Public Health Advocacy Team could inquire about a self-disclosed positive student case with county public health officials. Such information must be sent to the University Registrar and filed in the student's records. The Public Health Advocacy Team is responsible for ensuring this information is submitted to the student's records. If a notice is sent to the wider campus community, the notice should not contain personally identifiable information regarding students. Only the information needed to ensure the safety and well-being of the University community should be disclosed. For these reasons, campus supervisors, instructors, and student support staff should report information about a person's positive status **ONLY** to the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team.

## Scenario 2 Messaging: Lab-Confirmed/Positive Case of COVID-19

### 1. Message to Those with Lab-Confirmed/Positive Case of COVID-19:

Thank you for sharing that you have a laboratory-confirmed positive case of COVID-19. I hope you feel better soon. Here is what I recommend based on the information you shared:

Follow the advice of your medical provider and the local health department or the Department of Health and Human Services.

1. At a minimum, you need to self-isolate (and have others shop for you, clean up frequently after yourself if possible, and sanitize high-touch surfaces that you contact often) for a minimum of 10 days after symptoms began or you tested positive (if no symptoms). In addition to the minimum 10-day isolation, any fever should be resolved for at least 24 hours and any COVID-19 symptoms should be getting better for at least 3 days before leaving isolation. In most cases, a repeat COVID-19 test is not necessary to stop home isolation, but please follow the guidance of your medical provider.

2. All others who had close contact with you (within 6 feet or less for 15 minutes or longer in the 2 days before your symptoms appeared, or 2 days before you were tested if asymptomatic) must self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days after their last close contact with you, and they should self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.

This includes all family members or others living with you. All close contacts should also seek the advice of a medical provider to confirm the need to obtain a COVID-19 test. The University Public Health Advocacy Team needs to work with the local health department to contact your close UNL contacts. The public health team can help with that if you provide their names and contact information. These may include:

1. Co-workers in close contact with you 2 days before symptoms.
2. Roommates.
3. Any other member of the University community with known close contact with you.

You should notify our university Public Health Advocacy Team of your positive case at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865, and they will then follow up with you to collect the names and contact information of your close contacts. I also need to notify the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team of your lab-confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

Finally, you should notify your supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know you will miss any in-person work or school during your self-isolation period, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly.

This is a challenging time for everyone. Thank you for thinking of the well-being of others!

### 2. Supervisor/Instructor/Student Support Message to [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) to Report Lab-Confirmed Positive COVID-19 Case:

Hello, I am reaching out to you because FIRST NAME LAST NAME informed me on DATE that they have a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19.

I have responded with the appropriate message outlined in the campus guidance document about responses to COVID-19 notifications.

## SCENARIO 3: NEGATIVE LAB TEST FOR COVID-19

### If a faculty or staff member or student on campus tests negative for COVID-19:

Importantly, there are two scenarios that likely led to an individual seeking COVID-19 testing: (a) symptoms, or (b) close contact exposure to a person who tested positive for COVID-19.

If the individual was tested due to their own symptoms, but not close contact exposure, and the individual's test was negative, it is likely the symptoms are due to other common self-limited viral infections (rhinovirus, adenovirus, minor coronavirus, etc). These generally resolve in 7-10 days on their own. The individual may return to work and/or school after no fever for 24 hours and improvement of symptoms.

If the individual was tested due to close contact exposure with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 (with or without symptoms themselves), guidelines at the time of writing this document indicate the individual should still remain in self-quarantine for 14 days after the last close contact with the person who tested positive. This is because it is difficult to know whether the individual's test was too early to detect a positive result (given it can vary how soon after close contact exposure a person shows a positive test result if they are infected).

A faculty or staff member or student who is self-quarantining is strongly encouraged to notify their supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know the individual will miss some in-person work or school, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly.

Even if a test comes back negative, the individual should continue to closely monitor their health and symptoms and contact their medical provider or the University Health Center if symptoms develop or worsen during the self-quarantine period.

### *Scenario 3 Messaging: Negative Lab Test for COVID-19*

Messaging is likely only needed for this scenario if a faculty or staff member or student needs help having it clarified whether to continue self-quarantine after a negative result.

#### *Message to Those with Negative Lab Test for COVID-19:*

Thank you for sharing that you received a negative test result for COVID-19.

As a reminder, current guidance states that if you got tested because you were exposed to someone with a positive COVID-19 test, you should still self-quarantine for 14 days after your last close contact with that person, even if your test was negative. This is because sometimes it takes some time to test positive after exposure to COVID-19, and you may have been tested too early to detect a positive result.

You should notify your supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know you will miss any in-person work or school during your self-quarantine, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly.

You should continue to closely monitor for any symptoms and reach out to your doctor or the University Health Center if you develop or experience worsened symptoms.

This is a challenging time. Thank you for following public health guidelines to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our campus community.

## SCENARIO 4: EXPOSURE TO LAB-CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19

### **If a faculty or staff member or student on campus has been exposed to someone with a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19/someone who tests positive for COVID-19:**

If a faculty or staff member or student on campus informs the University that they have had close contact exposure to someone with a laboratory-confirmed/positive case of COVID-19, whether on-campus or off-campus, that individual should **self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days after the last close contact with the person confirmed positive, seek the advice of a medical provider to confirm the need to obtain a COVID-19 test, and self-monitor** for symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals in self-quarantine should separate themselves from others, including not going to in-person classes, work, or social/religious gatherings. They should avoid close contact with others, including those with whom they live. The faculty or staff member or student who was exposed should be strongly encouraged to notify their supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know the individual will miss any in-person work or school during the self-quarantine period, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly. Students living in University Housing are asked to self-report their quarantine via a Web form at <https://go.unl.edu/quarantine> so staff are aware and students may receive quarantine instructions. There is no need for campus supervisors, instructors, or student support staff to report cases of close contact exposure to the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team, unless the individual gets tested themselves and has a laboratory-confirmed/positive case of COVID-19. In cases that an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they should immediately notify the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865.

## Scenario 4 Messaging: Exposure to Lab-Confirmed Positive Case of COVID-19

### *Message to Those Exposed to COVID-19:*

Thank you for sharing that you've been exposed to someone with a laboratory-confirmed positive case of COVID-19. I hope you continue to feel well.

Here is what I recommend based on the information you shared:

1. You should self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days after your last close contact with the person confirmed positive, and self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Individuals in self-quarantine should separate themselves from others, including not going to in-person classes, work, or social/religious gatherings.
2. You should seek the advice of your primary doctor or the University Health Center to let them know of your exposure and confirm the need to obtain a COVID-19 test.
3. If a COVID-19 test is recommended for you, testing is readily available for UNL faculty, staff and students at no cost at the UNL on-campus [COVID-19 test site](#) on weekday afternoons. Testing is also available at the University Health Center weekdays and Saturday mornings; payment may be required at the Health Center.
4. You should notify those with whom you live that you are self-quarantining. You should avoid close contact with others, including those who you live with. Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of another person for 15 minutes or longer.
5. You should notify your supervisor/instructor(s) to make sure they know you will miss any in-person work or school during your self-quarantine, and to make any alternative arrangements accordingly.
6. If you are a student living in University Housing, you should self-report your quarantine via a Web form at <https://go.unl.edu/quarantine> so staff are aware and so you may receive quarantine instructions.
7. If you receive a positive COVID-19 test result indicating you have a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19, please notify the UNL Public Health Advocacy Team at [covid19@unl.edu](mailto:covid19@unl.edu) or via text message at 402-266-6865, or feel free to let me know if you'd like my help notifying that team. This is so the public health advocates can help confidentially notify your close contacts in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our campus community.

This is a challenging time for everyone. Thank you for thinking of the well-being of others!

## TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO EMPLOYEE OR STUDENT CONCERNS ABOUT GETTING TESTED OR NOTIFYING OF AN EXPOSURE OR POSITIVE TEST

If it is suspected an employee has concerns about job loss due to self-quarantine or self-isolation following a positive COVID-19 test, they should be reminded of [administrative and sick leave options](#).

If it is suspected a student has concerns about their course standing if missing classes due to self-quarantine or self-isolation following a positive COVID-19 test, they should be assured that instructors have been asked to offer flexible alternatives for students in such situations. If a student has a concern about a particular instructor, they may contact the [Office of Student Advocacy and Support](#).

If it is suspected a student has concerns about how receiving a positive COVID-19 laboratory test result could affect the operation of a student group to which they belong (e.g., club sport, Greek house, RSO, etc.), they should be reminded that the quicker we are aware of a positive case, the quicker we can respond to it and help ensure campus activities remain available this semester. We all need to do our part as quickly as possible to minimize the number of people in our campus community who become sick.

## DEFINITIONS:

**Close Contact:** any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for 15 minutes or longer, starting from 2 days before symptoms appeared (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient began isolation. Close contacts include anyone living with the infected person. As long as facial coverings are worn and 6 feet of physical distancing is maintained, being in the same classroom as someone who tests positive for COVID-19 does NOT constitute close contact.

**Quarantine:** the separation or restriction of movement of well persons who might have been exposed to a communicable disease while determining if they become ill. You should not go to in-person classes, work, or social/religious gatherings. You can go outside, but use a facial covering and physical distancing and avoid high-risk persons. Sanitize any high-touch surfaces that you contact often.

**Isolation:** the separation or restriction of activities of an ill person with a contagious disease from those who are well. Have others shop for you, clean up frequently after yourself if possible, and sanitize high-touch surfaces that you contact often.

## PROTECT YOURSELF AND OUR HUSKER COMMUNITY



**Wear a Mask**



**Practice Social Distancing**



**Wash Your Hands**

