

## Guidelines for Researchers

Updated May 25

As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to decline in our region, many University of Pittsburgh employees will begin returning to on-site work in UPMC facilities, while social distancing and universal masking remain in effect.

UPMC is committed to the safety of our patients, physicians, and staff, and all other individuals in our facilities at all times. Guidelines apply within any UPMC-owned or managed facility.

Any researchers returning to a clinical setting are subject to the requirements set forth by UPMC within that environment. UPMC is frequently reviewing and updating guidelines based on guidance from the state and public health authorities around the identified reintegration phases for each geographic region, new science, and monitoring of COVID-19 trends in the region. Any questions within a UPMC facility should be directed to the local leadership team.

Researchers must follow UPMC's safety guidelines within our facilities for the protection of our patients and staff.

- Wear UPMC-provided masks or other UPMC-required PPE.
- Practice hand hygiene.
- Follow social distancing protocols.

These guidelines are not a mandate for researchers to return to on-site work outside of clinical settings, and each should operate in the best manner to protect staff, patients, and visitors, and to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

### Entrance Screening

- UPMC hospitals, hospital-located outpatient departments, and Cancer Centers screen using a questionnaire and thermometer upon facility entry for all employees, special-approved visitors, essential vendors and non-UPMC health providers, and outpatients.
- Outpatient locations, including all physician practices, are not performing body temperature scans as part of any facility entry screening processes.
- Many UPMC hospital facilities have limited the number of entrances and have designated entry points for staff.

### Universal Masking

- Current public health guidance advises all individuals in communities UPMC serves to wear a cloth or surgical face mask while in all public spaces. When you enter many of our UPMC clinical facilities, you will be provided a shift-use mask to wear throughout your day. Wearing a shift-use face mask is an important way to protect yourself and others from viral infections. In areas without patient care, a cloth mask is required.
- Screening process, surgical face masks given to staff and providers (health care workers) as part of the screening process are considered shift-use masks.
- Health care workers are defined as:
  - Clinical Staff — Staff who provide direct patient care in diagnostic or treatment processes.
  - Non-Clinical, Patient Care Environment Staff — Staff who may not provide direct patient care but whose work requires them to be in patient care or clinical areas.

- Patient care or clinical care areas are defined as the physical or recognized borders of inpatient and outpatient areas where patients may be seen, evaluated, treated, or wait to be seen.
- Shift-use masks are mandatory to be worn at all times in all clinical areas, high-traffic public areas (i.e. hallways, cafeterias, lobbies, elevators), non-clinical areas, and patient or resident rooms in these levels of care:
  - Hospitals and hospital-based outpatient clinics including oncology and transplant
  - Cancer Centers
  - Skilled nursing, assisted living, personal care, and independent living long-term care residences
  - Outpatient locations
- When non-clinical staff working in non-clinical settings, non-cancer patients, special-approved visitors, and support persons enter our facilities, they may continue to wear their own cloth or surgical face mask upon facility entry and throughout our facility. All others should wear a UPMC-provided shift-use mask.
- All employees must wear a mask at all times while riding employee shuttles between their parking location and work location.
- UPMC has a comprehensive Personal Protective Equipment Plan. Researchers should consult local UPMC leadership to determine PPE requirements beyond masking for their individual situation.
- In non-clinical office buildings, masking is required in high-traffic areas (i.e. hallways, elevators, break rooms, lobbies, cafeterias) and around other people.

## Social Distancing

- Ensure staff can achieve social distancing in their work environment. This means staff should always be 6 feet apart. Consider a staff rotation or staggered shifts to help with this. This may require coordination with other floor managers.
- When staff members share a workspace, encourage each staff member to clean the workspace before using it.
- Ensure there are no in-person meetings of more than 25 people and that social distancing can still be achieved. Occupancy limits to encourage social distancing will be assigned to meeting rooms.

## Environmental Precautions

- To prepare for a safe return to work, UPMC has implemented the following:
  - Cleaned and disinfected all common areas, including break and lunch areas, entrances, and restrooms.
  - Increased cleaning protocols in common and high-traffic areas.
  - Put measures in place to control the flow of people entering and exiting facilities.
- UPMC will provide essential items for ensuring good hand hygiene. Attempts will be made to have hand sanitizer available, but shortages may prevent this.
- Frequent handwashing is encouraged. Restrooms and other common areas will be stocked with soap, so staff can practice good hand hygiene.
- UPMC facilities have increased their cleaning protocols in all work locations and will maintain regular housekeeping to ensure clean workspaces, in accordance with public health guidelines.

## Study Participants

- Study participants who enter UPMC-owned or managed facilities for the purpose of participating in research must follow the same requirements as staff, patients, and visitors, including:
  - Screening at the facility entrance (if applicable)
  - Wearing a mask
  - Following social distancing guidelines
- Participants should notify the study team if they are ill or have had any symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If they are feeling ill, participants should not come to the facility and should contact their primary care physician.
- Participants should be informed of the facility requirements for screening, masking, and social distancing prior to any scheduled appointments.

## Personal Health and Wellness

- Do your part to continue social distancing while in the workplace. This is especially important in high-traffic areas.
- Follow any signage or guidelines posted to help ensure that we can preserve social distance in the workplace.
- Everyone is asked to take the same precautions you would to protect yourself from any illness:
  - Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Discard the tissue, and wash your hands.
  - Stay home when you're sick.
  - If you become ill at work, ensure you are masked and advise your leader that you will need to go home.
  - If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or feel you have been exposed to the virus, contact your Employee Health department for guidance.