



## COVID-19 Toolkit

From the Columbia Policy Institute Healthcare Center

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### CDC Guidelines for Isolation

The first day of your isolation is Day 0. Regardless of your vaccination status, please remain home for 5 days, unless you are leaving for food or medical treatment.

**To calculate your Day 0 and decide when you can finish isolating:**

*If you had no symptoms:*

- **Day 0 is the day you were tested** (not the day you received your positive test result)
- **Day 1 is the first full day** following the day you were tested
- If you develop [symptoms](#) within 10 days of when you were tested, the **clock restarts at day 0 on the day of symptom onset**

*If you had symptoms:*

- **Day 0 of isolation is the day of symptom onset**, regardless of when you tested positive
- **Day 1 is the first full day** after the day your [symptoms](#) started

*Ending your isolation (for moderate to no symptoms):*

- The CDC recommends that you end your time in isolation if
  - 1) At least 5 full days have passed since your symptoms started
  - 2) And you have been fever-free for 24+ hours (without the use of fever-reducing drugs)
  - 3) And your symptoms are improving

*Ending your isolation (for severe symptoms):*

- If you were severely ill with COVID-19, you should isolate for at least 10 days and consider consulting your healthcare provider before ending isolation.

### **Activity Following Your Isolation**

- If your isolation ends prior to day 10, feel free to continue typical activities such as work and school.
- Please continue wearing a well-fitting, high-quality mask such as an N95 or KN95 when around others and avoid situations where you are unable to mask until day 11.
- Finally, try to avoid being around people who are immunocompromised or likely to become very sick from COVID-19.

For more information, visit the [CDC website!](#)

## Testing/Medication

**Q:** *Help! I'm feeling sick and I'm not sure if I was exposed to COVID-19! What should I do?*

**A:** Get tested! Especially if you've been exposed by someone you know or are exhibiting [COVID-19 symptoms](#), rapid tests are a good place to start.

**Q:** *Where should I go to pick up COVID tests?*

**A:** Regardless of your affiliation, you can access public testing resources via the [NYC COVID-19 Citywide Portal](#). Of rapid test locations, the closest include:

- **NY Public Library, Morningside Heights**

2900 Broadway New York, NY 10025

Monday - Friday: 12:00pm - 04:00pm

- **NY Public Library, George Bruce**

518 West 125th Street New York, NY 10027

Monday - Friday: 12:00pm - 04:00pm

**Q:** *Can I get COVID tests shipped to me too?*

**A:** Yes! The federal government is providing up to 4 free COVID tests (as long as you haven't ordered any since September 25th, 2023) at [www.covid.gov/tests](http://www.covid.gov/tests). These can be shipped directly to your student mailbox.

**Q:** *Are there any medications prescribed by a healthcare provider for COVID-19 I could take?*

**A:** If you feel your symptoms are moderate/severe, you can make an appointment with your healthcare provider (at Columbia or elsewhere) and be prescribed Paxlovid or Lagevrio, both [detailed by the CDC here](#). Both are taken orally for 5 days, and have demonstrated effectiveness

at reducing the length and severity of an infection. Please speak with your provider to ensure these drugs are right for you—a prescription should be fillable at most nearby pharmacies.

*Q: Are there any over-the-counter medications that can help relieve symptoms?*

**A:** Acetaminophen (Tylenol), naproxen (Aleve) and ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) can help reduce fever and decrease body aches; however, they will not shorten the virus's life. Be sure to follow the dosage guidelines applicable to you. Click [here](#) for more information on over the counter drug specifics.

*Q: Where can I get masks?*

**A:** You can get free masks at all the locations listed through this link [Free Masks!](#) The closest center near Columbia is the Broadway Presbyterian Church. If you are an on-campus student, you can also find free masks at any of the healthcare and wellness centers on campus.

*Q: Who should I contact if I have more questions related to COVID and finding resources?*

**A:** Columbia suggests emailing this link if you need help finding resources: [covidtesttrace@columbia.edu](mailto:covidtesttrace@columbia.edu). You can also fill out this [form](#).

## Housing and Quarantining 🏠

*Q: What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19, but I live with other people?*

**A:** Test as soon as you can and keep your mask on in shared spaces until you get your results back.

**Q:** *What should I do if I do have COVID-19?*

**A:** Notify everyone you live with and/or may have exposed in recent days. Try to find another space to stay nearby (friends and family near campus). Open a window and turn on a fan if you have it to ensure good ventilation. If you have access to a HVAC or air filter, turn that on and keep it in the room you are staying in.

**Q:** *What do I do if my roommate or suitemate has COVID-19?*

**A:** Try to find another place to stay if possible. Wear a mask when you are inside or in crowded public spaces.

**Q:** *What should I do if I don't have another place to stay?*

**A:** Keep your mask on at all times in shared spaces and try to have as little contact with your infected housemate as possible. If you live in the same room as the person with COVID-19 ensure there is good ventilation, try to keep beds 6 feet apart (you can rearrange the room to do this if you need to) and place a physical barrier (a sheet shower curtain, quilt, or cardboard poster board) between the beds.

## Dining 🍴

Ideally, people that are sick should go into dining halls as little as possible. If you have a roommate or friend that can pick up food from a dining hall for you, ask them! However, this may not be possible for every student or every meal.

If you have to go to a dining hall yourself, here are some guidelines and the ones we recommend (all are open to Barnard/Columbia students unless otherwise marked):

1. Mask up! Especially if you will be inside!
2. Try to go during off-peak hours to avoid contact with other students and staff as much as possible.
3. Don't eat in the dining hall! Most dining halls have ways for students to take food out of the dining hall to eat it.

## RECOMMENDED DINING HALLS!

### ✓ Quick grab'n go options

- Fac Shack (outside Wien Hall, Meal Swipe)
- JJ's express swipe (John Jay basement, Meal Swipe)
- Cafe East (Lerner 2nd floor) (COLUMBIA ONLY)
- Liz's Place (Diana coffee shop 1st floor, Meal Swipe)
- Barnard Bubble Tea and Sushi Spot (Milstein 1st floor) (BARNARD ONLY)

### ⚠ Fast takeout options without grab'n go

- Diana Center Cafe (2nd floor Diana, Meal Swipe)
- Chef Mike's (Uris 1st floor, Meal Swipe)
- Chef Don's (Mudd 1st Floor, Meal Swipe)
- Grace Dodge (Teachers College, Meal Swipe)

### ✗ Dining locations to ideally **avoid**

- John Jay
- Ferris
- Hewitt

### Without a meal plan

- [Too Good To Go](#)
- Halal carts (115th and Broadway, 116th and Amsterdam)
- Food trucks along Broadway
- Doordash/UberEats/Grubhub
- Can use [Flex/DD](#) for Grubhub, but otherwise fairly expensive
- Grocery delivery services (Instacart)

## Vaccination

**Q:** *What are the most recent CDC guidelines on COVID-19 vaccinations? When should I plan to get vaccinated?*

**A:** CDC recommends updated COVID booster for new Fall 2023 strains (for everyone 6 months and older). Regardless of your prior vaccinations, it's acceptable to mix and match vaccines (such as between Pfizer and Moderna). It's recommended to get the booster at least 2 months after your previous dose!

If you had COVID within the last 3 months, getting vaccinated is not as major of a priority. However, those with underlying conditions/risk for severe disease are recommended to get it sooner than 3 months post-infection. If you have questions, pharmacists are helpful!

**Q:** *I'm worried about contracting the virus. Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?*

**A:** As a Columbia/Barnard student, you can choose to get vaccinated on- or off-campus:

1) The NYC Vaccine Finder can be used to find off-campus vaccination sites (Columbia ZIP is 10027): <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>. A few locations near campus include:

- Duane Reade (Walgreens) 2864 Broadway (0.1 mi from campus)  
<https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>
- CVS 2833 Broadway (0.3 mi from campus):  
<https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/get-vaccinated>
- CVS 288 St Nicholas Avenue (0.6 mi from campus):  
<https://www.cvs.com/immunizations/get-vaccinated>
- Walgreens 568 W 125th (0.7 mi from campus):  
<https://www.walgreens.com/topic/promotion/covid-vaccine.jsp>

2) To schedule a COVID-19 vaccine appointment at Columbia Health, call 212-854-7426.

Students on the Columbia University Student Health Insurance Plan will have no out-of-pocket costs. Students not on the Student Health Insurance Plan will be charged \$125 for the vaccine.

3) Barnard College PCHS service does not offer COVID vaccines (although they do offer a number of free vaccines including the flu). The vaccines offered at Barnard are free for all students on the Student Health Insurance plan. All Barnard students can receive free consultations through PCHS, but any COVID vaccines must be received at a pharmacy like the one's referenced above.

**Q:** *How much do COVID-19 vaccines cost?*

**A:** #1 thing to know about COVID vaccines: THEY ARE FREE AT PHARMACIES REGARDLESS OF INSURANCE STATUS!

[Updated COVID-19 Vaccine Information \(CDC\)](#)

[Columbia Health COVID-19 Information](#)

**\*\*CDC recommends getting flu vaccine IN ADDITION to COVID booster\*\***

## Classes and Clubs

Use CPI email template to email professors that you're sick. Please feel free to edit as needed:

Dear [instructor's name],

Hello! My name is [enter name], and I'm a student in your [enter class] that meets on [insert day and time]. I'm emailing to let you know that I am unfortunately sick with COVID-19. [Columbia guidelines](#) recommend that I isolate at least until I am symptom free, so I won't be able to make it to class on [insert date].

Will a Zoom link be available for me to tune into class virtually and/or review a Zoom recording afterwards? Will any notes or slides be made available, and would you recommend attending office hours? What other class-related action(s) do you recommend I take given this circumstance?

Thank you!

Best,

[Name]



**Q:** *How can I stay up to date with classes while sick?*

**A:** You should refrain from overexerting yourself so that you can recover faster, but it is totally understandable to want to stay up to date in the meantime. Ask your professor whether a Zoom option and/or recording is available for those who cannot attend due to sickness. If your class requires extensive note-taking, consider asking a classmate to send you their notes.

**Q:** *When can I go back to class?*

**A:** This depends on your severity, but in general, you should continue to use a well-fitting, high-quality mask (preferably N95 or KN95) while testing positive even if asymptomatic. Those with mild symptoms should isolate for 5 days, whereas those with severe symptoms should isolate for 10 days. If you have a fever, continue to isolate until you are fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medication.

**Final Note:** Columbia/Barnard also offers a couple of compensated studies for those recently infected/recovering from COVID-19. If you're interested, please click through [here](#) and [here](#).

**This toolkit was developed by the Healthcare Center of the Columbia Policy Institute. Contributing members include: Kathan Reddy, Francesca Eisenberg, Caroline Crespino, Sai Choudari, Greta VanZetten, Cady Chen, Anusha Raghunathan, Brooke Kaye, Love Patel, Alan Chen, and Dennis Zhang.**

**If you find incorrect/outdated information, please contact Kathan at [kvr2112@columbia.edu](mailto:kvr2112@columbia.edu).**