

Reporting and Responding to COVID-19 Cases

Updates are in Bronze text

This document provides the NHTI college community members guidance on reporting COVID-19 symptoms (suspected case) **regardless of vaccination status**, testing positive for COVID-19 (confirmed case) or have a risk factor due to exposure to someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, **have post-vaccination dose symptoms** or have had recent high-risk travel.

Contact Tracing Overview

NHTI Contact tracers work collaboratively with the NH Department of Health and Human Service (NHDHHS) regarding COVID-19 cases and identified close contacts.

Because NHTI is a congregate setting there increased transmission risk and a responsibility for reporting and managing cases and contacts within the college community to mitigate COVID-19 transmission within the college and local community.

NHTI is required by state Public Health law to report to NHDHHS any person who has been on campus or participates in any school activity or event; including off campus; that are identified as a confirmed case, or as having a close contact exposure risk.

Definitions

Suspected COVID-19

Any individual **regardless of vaccination status** that have any new or unexplained symptoms of COVID-19, but who have not been tested for the novel coronavirus, are considered to be suspected of having COVID-19.

Confirmed COVID-19

Any individual **regardless of vaccination status** who have tested positive **through, Emergency Use Authorized (EUA) home COVID-19 test**, antigen or PCR test for the novel coronavirus, are considered to be confirmed of having COVID-19.

Close Contact

People who have been:

- Within six (6) feet for a cumulative of 10 minutes or longer during the infectious period of a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- Being sneezed or coughed or direct physical contact of a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 regardless of duration of time.
- Within three (3) feet in a **Controlled and Monitored Classroom** setting provided all conditions are met.

Close contact does not include:

- Fully vaccinated persons with all doses complete plus more than 14 days after last required dose. **These persons are still required to report circumstances to the NHTI contact tracing team.**
- Brief contact with a person in passing.
- Being in area that a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 has been.

Contact Tracing Goals

The main goals of contact tracing are to:

- To identify, support and provide information and resources those directly impacted to be excluded from campus, to self-isolate or self-quarantine per NHDHHS guidance to mitigate community transmission of COVID-19
- To prevent COVID-19 from being introduced into the college community and prevent COVID-19 clusters or outbreak if introduced to campus
- To minimize impact to college operations
- Support the local and New Hampshire community in its overall COVID-19 mitigation effort

Contact tracing consists of the following:

- Identifying suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, and determine close contacts of COVID-19 cases among the college population **both at on campus and off campus**
- Identifying areas on campus, campus activities, or events at which an individual may have been during their infectious period.
- Providing information on isolation, quarantine, and support resources.
- Follow-up check-in during the **exclusion**, isolation and quarantine period
- Advise when allowed to end **campus exclusion**, isolation or quarantine and return to the NHTI campus/**participate in college activities**.

NHTI Contact Tracing Team

The NHTI contact tracing team consists of all members of the NHTI Campus Safety Department, the NHTI Human Resources Officer and the NHTI Health Services Director.

All members of the contact tracing team have completed training in contact tracing through Johns Hopkins University and receive regular ongoing science and epidemiological updates on contact tracing operations from NHDHHS.

Self Reporting - Faculty, Staff, Students and Vendors

All faculty, staff, students and vendors regardless of status (on/off campus classes, online, remote) **are required** to report if any of the following that occur, **regardless if you are vaccinated or not**:

- Any new and unexplained signs and symptoms (even a mild single symptom) of COVID-19
- A positive COVID-19 test result
- Possible household or **close contact exposure as a close contact to a suspected** to a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Post-vaccination dose illness regardless of how mild the symptoms
- Recent high risk travel in the previous 10 days as per NH travel guidance.

Reporting Process

If you meet any of the above listed conditions:

- Do not come to any NHTI facility or attend any NHTI activity or event and:
- Isolate if you have any (even a mild single symptom) COVID-19 symptom(s), **post vaccination dose illness**, and/or are COVID-19 positive regardless if you have symptoms or not.
- Quarantine if you have a close contact exposure, **regardless of vaccination status**, or have returned to NH after high-risk travel as per NH State travel guidance and NHTI travel policy.

- The initial self-isolation, quarantine is needed NHTI Contact tracing to gather necessary information quickly to limit potential for increased contact, to determine status for potential exclusion and reporting to NHDHHS.

Individual Reports to Department Head, Faculty or Staff

If an individual (employee, student, vendor) reports to a department head, faculty or staff any of the COVID-19 listed conditions the department head, faculty/staff member shall:

- Advise the student to not come to any NHTI facility or attend any NHTI activity or event
- Advise the student to contact the NHTI Campus Safety Department
- Promptly forward any information you received from the student to the NHTI Campus Safety Department
- Maintain the privacy of the individual and do not share information or details of the individual's case with anyone that does not have an absolute "need to know" or without the individual's consent

Who To Report To

Students/Employees Reporting Student Information and Vendors

Contact NHTI Campus Safety at: nhticampussafety@ccsnh.edu or (603) 230-4042

Department Heads Reporting a Faculty/Staff Member or a Faculty and Staff Self Report

During normal business hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. contact NHTI Human Resources Officer Susan Makee at: smakee@ccsnh.edu or (603) 230-4000 x4122

After hours, weekends or if in a classroom setting contact NHTI Campus Safety at: nhticampussafety@ccsnh.edu or (603) 230-4042

What Happens in the Reporting Process

Intake Interview

Once a report is received a contact tracing team member will contact the individual who has COVID-19 symptoms (suspected case), tested positive for COVID-19 (confirmed case) or have a risk factor due to exposure to someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, have post-vaccinations symptoms or have had recent high-risk travel and conduct an intake interview and request specific information about their situation. This may include information such as:

- Dates, times, locations on campus and/or at off-campus school related activity
- Where in classrooms they were positioned and individuals around them
- Identify classroom/lab practices (i.e. PPE, mask wearing)
- Areas outside of classroom when they may associate with others related to the college
- Requesting COVID-19 testing results
- Requesting COVID-19 vaccination records
- Evidence of return into the United States for travel
- Advise in situations required by NHDHHS to report positive, close contact cases to NHDHHS

Follow-up

The individuals identified as suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case, identified close contacts or high risk travel quarantine will be provided:

- An email with information in NHDHHS isolations/quarantine requirements, COVID-19 signs and symptoms, state and college support resources, etc.

- Periodic contact to check in (approximately every three (3) days and monitoring for symptoms, testing, etc.

Ending Exclusion from Campus or Isolation

Individuals identified as suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, identified close contacts, **post vaccination illness**, will be provided information on when they can end their **exclusion/isolation** period per NHDHHS guidance whether test based or symptom based.

Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19

Symptom-based criteria are met for discontinuation of isolation:

- At least 10 days (**can be longer**) have passed since symptoms first started, AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever (off any fever-reducing medications), AND
- Symptoms have improved

Test based are met for discontinuation of isolation:

- Approved COVID-19 testing is negative AND
- At least 24 hours have passed since their last fever (off any fever reducing medications) and symptoms have improved.

Post COVID-19 Vaccination Dose Reaction/Illness

Post COVID-19 vaccination dose illness requires reporting to the contact tracing team to make specific determinations based on NHDHHS guidance. This is because persons who are not fully vaccinated can still contract COVID-19 during the vaccination process (not from the vaccinations) and this needs to be determined if it is likely a vaccination reaction or a COVID-19 positive case.

- These are determined on a cases by case basis per NHDHHS guidance and depending on symptoms,
- Depending on symptoms may require a follow up with a healthcare provider as they are only qualified persons to make determinations and refer for testing
- May require COVID-19 testing.

Per NHDHHS post-vaccination dose guidance for congregate settings; if it is unclear whether symptoms might be related to a vaccine reaction vs. COVID-19, then the NHTI contact tracing team will err on the side of caution and recommend testing of the symptomatic person. If indicated and the individual does not choose to follow up with health care or be tested the case will be treated as a suspected or confirmed case.

Ending Campus Exclusion/Quarantine

Non Household Close Contact

Non-Household close contact is set at 10 full days after the date of last exposure to a suspected or confirmed case there is no ability to test out of this circumstance.

- Exception, if the **suspected case** (not confirmed) that the individual is a close contact of subsequently tests negative this must be reported to the Contact tracing team to make a determination to end exclusion/quarantine.

Household Contact

Household close contact is set at 10 full days after the date of last exposure to a suspected or confirmed case there is no ability to test out of this circumstance. Being in the same household allows for continued exposure and the exclusion/quarantine period will be for the duration of the Positive cases isolation period plus the full isolation period.

- Exception, if the **suspected case** (not confirmed) that the individual is a close contact of subsequently tests negative this must be reported to the Contact tracing team to make a determination to end exclusion/quarantine.

Travel

Travel quarantine is per State of New Hampshire guidelines of ten (10) days with test out option day 7 or later after return to New Hampshire/

- Exception, for residence Hall students and athletics will quarantine for the full 10 days as they cannot effectively meet all additional mitigation requirements (social distancing, mask wearing, etc.) after a 7-days test out option.

Illness on Campus

If any person develops illness on campus immediately contact the NHTI Campus Safety Department on the emergency line at (603) 224-3287 for an immediate response. Individuals who are ill should be kept away from others and will be isolated per response protocols.

Prior infection with COVID-19

While generally an individual has ninety (90) days of immunity from the onset of an infection, this is not always the case. Having prior infection with COVID-19 does not preclude someone from contacting the contact tracing team if they are a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case or develop any new and unexplained symptoms of COVID-19. A member of the contact tracing team will provide guidance and information regarding what you should do.

Those Vaccinated for COVID-19

The available vaccines are highly effective, however, they are not 100% effective, and breakthrough cases can occur.

If you are fully vaccinated and develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or have household/close contact with a COVID-19 positive person **you are required to contact the contact tracing team** to evaluate your individual circumstances and determine if you should be excluded from campus or not. isolate or quarantine. **This will be done on a case by case basis.**

Post COVID-19 Dose Reactions

COVID-19 vaccinations have potential for side effects and symptom development post vaccination. Some symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, however, there are specific symptoms that occur with COVID-19 that do not occur with any of the vaccinations.

Full vaccination is defined as completion of all required vaccine doses (two for Moderna or Pfizer and one for Johnson and Johnson) and more than fourteen days after last required dose.

Under any of the following situation you must self-isolate and contact the contact tracing team:

- If you have received any vaccination dose and experience symptoms post vaccination dose
- If you have any new and unexplained symptoms of COVID-19 even if you are partially or fully vaccinated

This will be for verification of ones status for potential for exclusion from quarantine and to provide guidance on requirements under these circumstances.

Even if you have completed the full vaccination process this does not exempt anyone from continuing to social distance, wear masks, perform hand hygiene or other safety measures in place while on campus.

COVID-19 Variants

Thirteen COVID-19 [Variants of Concern or Variants of Interest](#) have emerged. Investigations are ongoing to determine impacts of these variants and how they affect transmissibility rate, mortality rate, rates of reinfection and potential for impact on vaccinations or treatments. Some of these variants of concern have demonstrated increased transmissibility rates, mortality rates and rates of reinfection, and slightly reduced efficacy of some COVID-19 vaccinations and treatments.

Reporting to NHDHHS

The NHTI contact tracing team works closely with the NHDHHS in all contact tracing operations that occur within the NHTI college community. The college liaison will report all confirmed cases and close contacts to the NHDHHS.

Information Provided to the Contact Tracing Team

All information on individual identification, that is submitted or provided to the contact tracing team is kept in strict confidence and shared limited to only those on a “need to know basis” and comply with applicable laws to maintain the privacy of individuals and their health information.

Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is prohibited:

- Faculty, staff, and onsite vendors are not to conduct their own investigation into cases and/or contacts and are only to report theirs or a students reporting information as soon as possible.
- Failure to report illness or close contact exposure to the contact tracing team
- Providing false information during contact tracing operations which could impact the health and safety of individuals or the college community.
- Violation of quarantine or isolation protocols.

For More Information Contact

If there are any additional questions please contact the NHTI Campus Safety Department at <mailto:nhticampussafety@ccsnh.edu>

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