

# MITIGATING COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

## Changes Outlined in Bronze

### Get Vaccinated - COVID-19 Vaccine Information

Currently, anyone 5 years of age and older is eligible to be vaccinated for COVID-19, and you are encouraged to do so.

Approved vaccines are safe and are effective at reducing symptomatic COVID-19 illness, severe disease, hospitalization and death should you contract COVID-19.

Those that are “up to date” on COVID-19 vaccinations are not exempt from adhering to guidance set forth by this or other CCSNH or NHTI policy documents.

For additional information on vaccines please see the following:

- [Getting COVID-19 vaccinated in New Hampshire](#)
- [General COVID-19 vaccine information from the CDC](#)

### COVID-19 Mitigation Measures

No single intervention will stop the spread of COVID-19, as infection or transmission of COVID-19 can occur in individuals who are vaccinated or unvaccinated and even if they have no or few symptoms. Implementing multiple layers of protection (i.e., layered mitigation measures) in conjunction with high vaccination rate will be most effective at reducing COVID-19 from spreading.

Below is a list of available Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI) that the more used in conjunction can reduce, not eliminate COVID-19 spread.

### COVID-19 Symptom Self-Monitoring /Screening

Monitor yourself daily for COVID-19 symptoms. If you have any of the listed symptoms of COVID-19, regardless if you are up to date on vaccinations or not, you must follow the [COVID-19 reporting procedures](#).

Many of these symptoms are consistent with other respiratory illnesses and the only way to determine if you have COVID-19 or not is through testing.

This list is not inclusive of all COVID-19 symptoms, but are the most common symptoms of COVID-19. Any of these symptoms are most likely to occur between 2-14 days from COVID-19 exposure.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Symptom and risk factor screening will be done in certain limited circumstances and by only specific staff:

- The NHTI Dental Clinic of all faculty, staff, students and patients as required for infection control protocols per CDC guidelines. This will be accomplished by Dental Clinic staff.
- For persons identified as symptomatic with COVID-19 on campus and needing to be isolated from others. This will be done by either Health Services or responding Campus Safety staff.

## Wearing Masks of Face Masks/Coverings

The purpose of face masks/face coverings is to provide some protection to the person wearing the facemask, and prevent the spread of COVID-19 from the person wearing the facemask to others. This is most effective when done universally.

### Indoors

The wearing facemasks **is not required and is optional**, except for the following situations:

- Entering into, or being in the Health Services Clinic
- Entering into, or being in the clinical area of the NHTI Dental Clinic
- At large events where there are fifty or more persons
- Those responding to persons suspected COVID-19
- Those on campus who develop symptoms must mask and report immediately per the NHTI COVID-19 reporting procedure

A Federal mask mandate is applicable to all persons, regardless of vaccination status until March 18, 2022 and requires that a mask be worn at all times when on all planes, buses, trains, subways, ships, taxis, ride shares and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. **This includes buses and other transportation used by schools.**

Masks **should not** be worn by:

- Children younger than 2 years' old
- Anyone who has trouble/difficulty breathing
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

### Outdoors

Masks, generally do not need to be worn and are not required outdoors.

### General Mask Usage Information

The key to increased face mask/face covering effectiveness relies on universal, correct and consistent use. See the [CDC website](#) and the NHTI mask/face covering guidance on the [Important Announcements page](#) for more information on the correct usage of facemasks.

Facemask use continues to be encouraged, especially for [people who are at higher risk](#) for developing severe outcomes.

No individual on campus shall be subject to harassment, ridicule, taunts or other negative reaction based on their choice to continue to wear or use a facemask for their personal protection.

The NHTI Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT) has established a metric based on set of criteria including: Public health guidance, college and community transmission rates, etc. with trigger points in which to re-establish universal masking, if needed.

## Maximize Physical Distancing

NHTI is currently conducting full in person classroom learning environments and physical distancing may not be achievable in all classroom spaces.

Physical distancing, is keeping a safe space between yourself and others who are not from your household. You should try and physically distance at least six (6) feet from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces; especially if you are not wearing a face covering, regardless if you are fully vaccinated or not.

People can spread the virus before they know they are sick and without symptoms, it is important to stay at least six (6) feet away from others when possible. Physical distancing is especially important for [people who are at higher risk](#) for severe illness from COVID-19.

Physical distancing is **increased** to over eight (8) to ten (10) feet in the following circumstances:

- Physical activity that causes heavy or labored breathing (i.e. in the fitness center, or exercising in groups)
- In a chorus or when persons are singing
- When instruments that require the use of a person's mouth are used

Physical distancing can be decreased to at least three (3) feet in the following circumstances:

- **Controlled and Monitored classroom setting.** Which require: faculty member present at all times, universal, correct and consistent use of facemasks, limited movement and use seating charts. If the space is not used as a classroom, then six (6) foot distancing requirements should apply.

To promote increased physical distancing during the current surge and will be reevaluated at a later date:

- All events, groups and activities **currently have no restrictions on number of persons, however, large group events over 50 will require specific approval.**
- The dining areas on campus will continue to have reduced density seating of maximum to **three per table, two per seating booth and one per small table.**

## Ventilation

In conjunction with, or as an alternative to areas where social distancing is difficult increase ventilation to rooms/areas by bringing fresh air into and removing indoor air from a classroom. Understanding the efficiency of ventilation requires assessment of existing HVAC systems.

- Most buildings have HVAC systems that can mechanically replace indoor air in classrooms/other areas.
- Air filtration has been improved with iWave systems and replacement of air filters.
- Higher risk areas have had some increased air purification through air purifiers units.
- Where HVAC is unavailable/or to increase a rooms airflow:
  - Open windows to the room. Even partially opened windows can bring in beneficial air flow. Do this if safe to do so and weather permits. **Ensure you close windows when leaving for the day**
  - Place a fan in one of the windows to pull inside air to the outside.

## Cohorting

If feasible establish cohorts/groups and avoid mixing of groups to limit number of people who may come in contact with each other.

Cohorting is more important when physical distance cannot or is difficult to maintain. Some examples where cohorting can be used: Athletic teams, labs where there are lab partners, programs where students have to work directly with each other in close contact, etc.

Eliminate/limit the sharing of items. If items must be shared disinfect in between use.

## Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

It's especially important to wash or sanitize one's hands:

- Before eating or preparing food, or touching your face
- After using the restroom, leaving a public place, blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, handling your mask, caring for someone sick, touching animals or pets

Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.

- Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning, disinfection and other sanitation guidelines are contained in the cleaning, disinfection and sanitation for COVID-19 document found at [Important Announcements page](#).

## Campus Community Expectations and Other Information

Everyone has a role to play in slowing the spread and protecting themselves, their family, and their community. COVID-19 is not limited to the NHTI campus and there is the expectation that employees and students practice public health measures while on and off campus. The Social Compact for Students and Employees outlines this.

For additional information on how COVID-19 is spread, how to protect yourself and other information please [click here](#) to access the information on the CDC website.

Failure to adhere to the required mitigation protocols outlined in this document may result in disciplinary actions through CCSNH employee workplace policies, or the NHTI Student Code of Conduct for students.

If you should have additional questions please contact the NHTI Campus Safety Department at [NHTI Campus Safety](#)

Information used in this document was obtained from the NHDHHS and the CDC websites.

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