Working safely for UNC researchers: COVID-19 policies

August 3, 2020 BBSP Orientation
Jean Cook
1. Stay home if you have symptoms
2. Mask consistently (nose and mouth)
3. Distance between people
4. Hand hygiene
School of Medicine (SoM)

Departments and other Admin. units

Office of Medical Education (MD students & residents)

Office of Research (OoR)

Vice Chancellor for Research

UNC Chancellor’s Office

The Graduate School

Other schools:
- College of Arts and Sciences
- School of Pharmacy
- School of Public Health
- School of Dentistry
- School of Nursing
- School of Law
- School of Government
- School of Social Work
- School of Journalism
- School of Education
- School of Library Science
- School of Business

Office of Graduate Education (OGE)

- Biological and Biomedical Sciences Program (BBSP)
- Initiative for Maximizing Student Development (IMSD)
- TIBBS (professional dev.)
- Postbaccalaureate Research Educ. Prog. (UNC PREP)
- Summer Undergrad Res. Exp. (SURE/SOLAR)
- Faculty Mentor Training
- Science Outreach – DNA Day
- Affinity group support (SACNAS, STEM Pride, WiNS, GPB, etc.)

PLUS many more OGE Directors, faculty leaders, and staff!

Associate Dean for Graduate Ed. (Jean Cook)

Assistant Dean for Graduate Ed. (Donita Robinson)

BBSP Faculty Director (Lisa Tarantino)

BBSP Director (Dave McDonald)
06/01/2020: UNC transitioned to Phase 2 research operations

Months of planning by a Vice Chancellor for Research task force of top epidemiologists, public health experts, virologists, and researchers

• UNC is top-ranked US institution for Coronavirus research (Microsoft Academic, citation metrics)
• UNC Gillings School of Public Health is #1 public and #2 overall (US News & World Report)
• UNC Hospitals and UNC Health has months of experience protecting healthcare workers while treating covid-19 patients.

No cases of on-campus* transmission since 06/01/20

• UNC Hospitals: 128 positive employees out of 15,000 since March,
• Prior to universal masking in March, one covid patient → employee and a few staff to staff transmissions. *The vast majority of transmissions are thought to be community transmission. PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) works.
• 13 UNC students and staff have tested positive in the last 7 days (>12,000 full-time employees, +X? students in town in July)
Information Sources

• North Carolina Dept. of Health and Human Services  
  https://www.nc.gov/covid19

• UNC Roadmap https://carolinatoggether.unc.edu/  
  • Weekly updates (on website and by email)  
  • CV-19 Dashboard https://carolinatoggether.unc.edu/dashboard/

• Emails from campus and program leaders  
• New: Carolina Ready Safety mobile app

Monitor your emails.
1. Stay home if you have symptoms

- Do not come to campus if you have symptoms.
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fever
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Sore throat
  - New gastrointestinal symptoms
  - Sudden loss of taste or smell
  - Headache
  - Fatigue

This requirement does not apply if symptom(s) are known to be attributable to an existing condition unrelated to COVID-19.

Exposures (you are asymptomatic)
- **Medium-risk exposure** is when only one person (you or the contact person) was wearing a mask.
- **High-risk exposure** is when no one was wearing a mask.

UNC students exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or with medium or high-risk exposure contact UNC Campus Health (919–966–2281) for testing.
Getting to campus

- Arrange your bench schedule with the lab
  - Current rules require buildings to be at or below 50% occupancy
  - Work from home when possible (data analysis, reading, etc.)
  - Communicate your course schedule, ask about lab meetings, seminars.
  - Meet regularly with advisors and bench mentors, frequent communication!

- Transportation
  - Bus schedules are new and will further adjust to needs, masks required
  - other options: walk, bike, carpool, parking permit
  - Parking on campus is free before 7:30 am, after 4 pm, and on weekends

- Some lab buildings are locked and require badge access
  - Incoming students have SoM building access
  - HR designation: Communicable Disease Mandatory Employees (CDME)
Mask consistently (nose and mouth) mandatory on campus and in NC

- Adjust to fit snugly and wear indoors over mouth and nose at all times*
- Wear outdoors unless >> 6 feet from others
- Students receive 2 washable cloth masks mid-August with “Carolina Together Student Kits”.
- Replacements available in the Bondurant, MEJ, and MBRB lobbies.
  - [https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/](https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/)

Personal masks? The SoM expects researchers to wear the masks provided by UNC. These masks have been rigorously tested to be as good or better than surgical masks used by hospital workers. Exceptions for medical reasons (not preference).
Mask consistently (nose and mouth)

*Meals and drinks?*

- Only unmask in designated eating areas with appropriate distancing.
  - dining facilities [dining.unc.edu/menu-hours](https://dining.unc.edu/menu-hours)
  - food trucks
  - outdoor tables
  - new outdoor canopies soon (week of 8/10)
  - designated rooms (depending on building)
- maintain distance when unmasked – indoors and out
- skip water fountains, have straws for quick sips

- Do NOT unmask or lower your mask in lab buildings, even if you think there aren’t others around. Individuals may report non-compliance by calling the Ethics Point Hotline at **(866) 294–8688**. Visit the Ethics Point website for additional information. You can also contact your lab’s HR representative to report non-compliance.
Distancing

- Individuals maintain physical distance with a minimum of 6 ft apart *
- each person 8 ft radius = 200 ft² 2.4 m radius = 18.6 m²
- Maximum occupancy in elevators, bathrooms is posted
- Some small research rooms (tissue culture, microscopy) may only allow 1 person

* Exception

When distancing is not possible – such as for training – all workers wear both masks and face shields or wrap-around eye protection. Regular eyeglasses are not enough. In clinical settings, this level of PPE is considered a low-risk exposure even to an unmasked COVID-positive patient. PPE will be provided by your lab.

Get creative with training videos!
Example: open labs in Genetic Medicine Building (GMB)

Adjacent benches may not be able to be occupied at the same time.

Check with your lab about their procedures for physical distancing.
Hand Hygiene

- Wash hands frequently with soap, 20 seconds
- Wear gloves for bench work, remove/change gloves otherwise
- Hand sanitizer, wipes, and disinfectant sprays are provided in common areas, classrooms, and distributed to labs
- Staff are frequently cleaning high-touch surfaces
  - https://facilities.unc.edu/news/operational-updates/
- Disinfect common surfaces (eating rooms) frequently
- Avoid touching eyes or face with unwashed hands
Self-Care

- Make self-care activities part of a regular routine
- Socialize and connect with family, friends, new peers, FYG
  - provide support, kindness, and *patience* to others
  - engage in meaningful outside activities
- Attend to physical well-being (exercise, nutrition, sleep)
- Wellness counselors are available: https://www.med.unc.edu/wellness/counseling/

Optional UNC Research Study – research staff and trainees

- Regular Sars-Cov2 PCR testing
- antibody persistence, prevalence of asymptomatics
- testing new technologies (e.g. compare antibody tests)
- optional contact tracing phone app
- https://research.unc.edu/about/administration/matters/
North Carolina is in Phase 2 through August 7th.

- Face coverings required
- Some businesses open with limits
- Some businesses closed (bars, gyms, theaters)
- Limits on gatherings (some exceptions)

- **State parks and trails are open.**

- Additional local restrictions (e.g., alcohol sales, playgrounds)

- [https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/Phases-List.pdf](https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/Phases-List.pdf)
Tracking COVID-19 in North Carolina
(https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard)

POSITIVE TESTS
8%

Percent Positive by County

Which counties are seeing a decline or sustained leveling of percent of tests that are positive?

UNC is in Orange County.
Durham County is just to the east,
Chatham County is south.

July 31, 2020
Do you have symptoms of COVID-19?

If you have GSHP graduate student health insurance or use Campus Health as your primary care provider...

**Step One:** call your UNC Campus Health provider to request a test (919-966-2281)

**Step Two:** self-quarantine and update your PI. You must be cleared by Campus Health before returning to work.

If you have private health insurance or do not use Campus Health as your primary care provider...

**Step One:** contact the University Employee Occupational Health Clinic (919-966-9119, 8:30am-4:30pm, Mon-Fri). If you meet criteria, you will be scheduled for testing typically within 4-6 hrs at the ACC Respiratory Disease Center.

**Step Two:** self-quarantine and update your PI. You must be cleared by Occupational Health before returning to work.

*Testing should be covered by your insurance. There are no out-of-pocket costs for symptomatic COVID-19 testing due to the CARES Act.*
1. Stay home if you have symptoms
2. Mask consistently (nose and mouth)
3. Distance between people
4. Hand hygiene