

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Fact Sheet for NIH Clinical Center Patients and Visitors

Our goal is to keep our patients, visitors and staff safe through the pandemic. To protect patients and staff, the NIH Clinical Center has implemented a screening process for all patients and their visitors. The screening process is designed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 inside the NIH Clinical Center.

Please Note: the NIH Clinical Center is not a screening facility for the general public. Members of the public who believe they have coronavirus should seek care from their primary care doctor.

What will happen at the screening location?

You will have your temperature taken and will be asked several questions to determine if you are at high risk for COVID-19 infection, including whether you have symptoms of COVID-19 infection. If you have low risk for COVID-19 infection, you will proceed to your appointment(s). Everyone (patients, staff, and visitors) inside the Clinical Center will wear a surgical mask that the Clinical Center will supply.

Will I be tested for COVID-19?

You may be tested for COVID-19 if you have COVID-19 symptoms, are having certain medical procedures, or if you will be an inpatient at the Clinical Center. Visitors who are approved to room-in with a patient will also be tested. Other than these groups, we will not test anyone on request if they do not have symptoms.

What will happen if you have symptoms of COVID-19?

If you are found to have symptoms, you and any visitors with you will be asked to put on a mask and will be moved to another location for additional screening, which may include testing for COVID-19. The test requires a nasal swab.

What will happen to my family members or visitors who are not patients if they have symptoms of COVID-19?

Family members or visitors who have symptoms, but are not patients, will be asked to contact their primary care practitioner for follow up. They will not be allowed into the Clinical Center. The ONLY exception is if the visitor is the adult caregiver or a pediatric (age 18 and under) patient—and both the adult caregiver and the pediatric patient arrived at the Clinical Center together. In that instance, both the adult caregiver and the pediatric patient will be escorted to the dedicated, specially designed area of the hospital for further assessment.

Why are the staff wearing protective gear?

Staff are wearing protective gear to avoid exposure to respiratory viruses, including flu, seasonal cold viruses, and COVID-19.

Why am I asked to wear a mask?

After screening, all patients and visitors will be given a mask to wear while inside the Clinical Center so that everyone is protected. The mask can only be removed when eating or drinking or when a medical procedure requires it. The mask should be put on any time a staff member enters your room. We also encourage social distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible.

If I have been vaccinated for COVID-19, do I still need to wear a mask?

It is important for everyone to continue wearing a mask while at the Clinical Center.

If I have been vaccinated for COVID-19, do I still need to be tested for COVID-19?

Yes. Measures such as testing and wearing masks are intended to protect Clinical Center patients, because many patients are at increased risk of severe COVID-19.

If I get COVID-19 testing, does that mean that I have COVID-19 infection?

If you are tested for COVID-19, it means you may have symptoms of COVID-19 or may be undergoing certain medical procedures. Other infections and other medical conditions can give you the same symptoms. Only a test for COVID-19 can determine whether COVID-19 infection is the cause of your symptoms.

How will I learn about my COVID-19 test results?

If the test result is available while you are at the Clinical Center, you can ask your medical team for the result. This test result will also be available with your other medical records on the Patient Portal.

If my test is positive, will I have to leave the NIH?

If you have a positive test for COVID-19, we will talk to you about the infection and your options for care. We will work with you to ensure that the best decision for your care is made and that all public health requirements are followed. If you are infectious, you may put others at risk and we will encourage you to stay at the Clinical Center on isolation or make arrangements to move you somewhere that you can isolate safely.

What other restrictions are in place for patients and visitors to the NIH Clinical Center?

Inpatients and their visitors must stay in their room until COVID-19 test results are available unless they must leave their room for medical purposes. Inpatients and their rooming in visitors may walk in the public spaces inside the hospital unless the patient is on isolation. Patients and rooming in visitors may leave the hospital to walk on campus **after** notifying your patient's nurse, but you must remain on the NIH campus at all times. Patients and their visitors must wear a mask and practice social distancing whenever you are outside the patient's room including when you are walking around the NIH campus. Patients and visitors may not visit any other patients and

visitors. The NIH is a smoke-free campus so options for smoking during your visit are very limited. Please discuss options to quit smoking with your medical team or your primary care physician.

Who do I contact if I have more questions?

Please contact your NIH medical team if you have more questions about COVID-19.