



December 9, 2023

HICU GUIDANCE regarding COVID-19 during the 2023 Holidays

Because of observed increasing numbers of COVID-19 in the last 7 days, the HICU put together this guide to answer the frequently asked questions (FAQs).

- 1. Should the UP PGH Community return back to usual masking in the hospital even outside the clinical areas now that there are reports of increasing number of COVID-19 cases? ?**

Answer: YES. Effective immediately, the HICU will once more require ALL patients, relatives, staff and trainees to **wear at least a surgical mask at all times when inside any area of the hospital: both indoor, outdoor, inside offices, conference rooms and clinical areas.**

Similarly, the HICU recommends wearing mask whenever in any place or situation even outside the hospital, and specially where there is poor ventilation, crowding, or when the individual feels vulnerable or weak or has remained unvaccinated against the SARS CoV2.

- 2. What should I do if I got exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case?**

Answer: If you were within 1 meter distance of a person who eventually tested positive for COVID -19 (RT PCR test or Antigen test), put on at least a surgical mask and wear this all the time as much as feasible. Then assess self and follow this guide:

- **If you are otherwise a healthy individual with no known illnesses and younger than 60 years, NO NEED TO TEST as long as NO SYMPTOMS.**
- **If you are otherwise healthy and young, BUT DEVELOP SYMPTOMS such as cough, colds, sore throat, fever and other new symptoms, TAKE THE TEST (COVID ANTIGEN or COVID RT PCR) immediately and report results accordingly.**
- **If you are 60 and above, or have other underlying illnesses, or have remained unvaccinated, we would like to know if you got infected or not.**
 - If you develop any symptom, take the COVID ANTIGEN TEST. If POSITIVE, inform your doctor, or UPHS or HICU for possible prescriptions.

- If you remain asymptomatic, you may opt to take the COVID test preferably the RT PCR after 5 days from last exposure.
- Patients who are elderly or have comorbidities and develop mild to moderate COVID-19 have been seen to reduce their risk for progressing to severe disease by taking antiviral agents within the first five days of onset of symptoms. At the moment, the oral antiviral drug available in the Philippines is Molnupiravir. See your doctor or UPHS if this is an appropriate treatment for you.
- Monitor yourself. If you start having difficulty breathing, seek emergency medical care immediately.

3. Can I attend the Homecoming activities and other Christmas parties if I was exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case but have no symptoms and otherwise well?

Answer: YES, as long as no symptoms, exposed individuals may continue their usual activities. You should wear at least a surgical mask during these activities.

4. Can I attend the Homecoming and other Christmas parties if I tested positive for COVID-19 but have very mild or no more symptoms?

Answer: NO, you have to stay in isolation (alone in room) if you have COVID-19. If you tested positive by either Antigen or RT PCR for SARS COV2, you should isolate yourself for:

- at least 5 days for MILD
- at least 10 days for MODERATE
- up to 21 days if you were admitted to the hospital for SEVERE COVID or immunocompromised.

Similarly if you just tested positive: you should NOT TRAVEL, or expose others who may be immunocompromised or vulnerable to progressing to being very sick from COVID-19. You are most infectious during the first 5 days of infection.