

FAQ: Phase 2 COVID-19 Employee Testing

Q: Why is UConn Health testing employees for COVID-19?

As we return to more regular services at UConn Health, we want to ensure employee and patient safety. Part of this strategy is assessing the prevalence of SARS-CoV2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in asymptomatic employees. Also, our employee testing program aligns with both state reopening guidelines and sound principles for managing the pandemic risk as we continue to ramp up our regular services while at the same time remain vigilant about the recurrence of COVID-19 cases.

Q: What did Phase 1 testing results show?

In Phase 1, our goal was to test approximately 900 of our approximately 2,800 clinical workers (those who work in all areas of the hospital or outpatient care settings, including dental). Of the 1,200 randomly selected clinical employees invited by email to participate, 445 employees voluntarily signed up and were successfully PCR tested. We are pleased to report that there were zero positive tests reported in Phase 1.

Q: Why is COVID-19 employee testing being expanded from Phase 1 to Phase 2?

Although Phase 1 provided reassuring results that our COVID-19 prevalence is low, not as many employees volunteered to participate as we had originally hoped. In consultation with our Infection Control and testing teams, UConn Health decided to continue the voluntary testing of our asymptomatic clinical employees.

Q: What is involved in our Phase 2 COVID-19 employee testing?

In Phase 2, all of our approximately 2,800 clinical employees will now be offered a clinical sample via nasopharyngeal swab for SARS-CoV2 RNA PCR testing if they choose to participate. The dedicated employee testing location is the sampling tent outside of the Emergency Department. All clinical employees are receiving email invitations with instructions about how to proceed. Note, an employee must [sign up for MyChart](#) to be able to schedule his or her test.

Q: Who is deemed a 'clinical' employee?

Based on guidance received from the State and UConn Health Infection Control, clinical employees from across departments at UConn Health are those who spend greater than 10 minutes within 6 feet of patients; have prolonged/regular contact with blood or body fluids; or work with high risk individuals.

Q: What if I am an employee who was already tested in Phase 1?

Employees who participated in successful PCR testing during Phase 1 are excluded from participating in Phase 2. If you receive an email invitation to participate in Phase 2 testing and you have already successfully completed a PCR test in Phase 1, please do not register for another

test.

Q. Can I participate if I have previously tested positive for COVID-19?

No. Employees who have previously tested positive for the virus with a PCR test are excluded from Phase 2 testing. If you receive an email invitation to participate in Phase 2 testing and you have previously tested positive for the virus, please do not respond to the email invitation.

Q: Will testing ever be expanded to all UConn Health employees?

Decisions about future testing will be based on results obtained in Phase 2 testing, the prevalence of the virus in our hospital, other area hospitals and throughout the region and the state, and data and guidance from Infection Control and other public health experts.

Q: What if I test positive?

Should you test positive for the virus, our COVID-19 Call Center will promptly contact you to assess any health care needs and will provide guidance on next steps regarding work activities. The Call Center also will send a secured email notification to Human Resources and your manager. Epic will safeguard the confidentiality of this information. Asymptomatic employees with a positive test will be notified by the COVID-19 Call Center to follow standard policy and quarantine at home for the required 10 days. Such employees will qualify for COVID-19 Sick Leave or given a telecommuting assignment as appropriate.

Q: What if I prefer not to be tested?

Similarly to Phase 1, participation in the Phase 2 sampling is still voluntary, not mandatory. However, participation is strongly encouraged, as it will help our organization determine the prevalence of COVID-19 among our employees. Understanding the prevalence rates both throughout the organization and within specific areas will provide important data to help inform our ongoing safety strategy and protocols.

Q: Will I have to be tested again in the future?

Our current ongoing prevalence assessment for COVID-19 at this time is still a one-time baseline PCR test for asymptomatic clinical employees. Should our testing strategy change or the testing frequency needs to be adjusted, we will communicate updates to the UConn Health community.

Q: What if I have questions or concerns about testing, or if I am still not sure if I am a Phase 2 clinical employee who should be tested?

If you have any employee testing questions, please contact the COVID-19 Call Center at 860-679-3199, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Q: I am having trouble accessing MyChart, how can I get help?

For MyChart questions and technical support, please call the IT Help Desk at x4400.