

# Yale SCHOOL OF NURSING

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – COVID PROTOCOLS AND PLANNING

Last Updated 11/10/2020

**Please note that information can change rapidly during the pandemic. Please check your emails frequently for updated instructions.**

### **COVID-19 SAFETY**

#### ***How do I protect myself from COVID-19 exposure during my clinical hours?***

You should make sure you have access to, and have thoroughly read, all safety protocols for your clinical site. One of the best lines of defense against COVID-19 is the proper use of clinically-indicated PPE per the facility's protocols (note that in many cases this will not be an N95 respirator). If you do not know the site-specific protocols or where to find them, please talk to your preceptor.

#### ***How do I protect myself from COVID-19 exposure while on campus?***

Just like our clinical partners, Yale and YSN have gone to great lengths to prevent exposure to COVID-19 while on campus. We have set up the physical space to support social distancing and added physical barriers (such as plexiglass) where social distancing is not feasible. Visitors are not allowed without approval. All those on campus are required to wear face masks at all times. Staff compliance monitors are on-site daily to ensure adherence to protocol.

### **PPE**

#### ***Why was I fit-tested this year yet didn't receive an N95?***

Every year students are fit-tested for PPE so that they know what size/fit they require should PPE be required. Although we test for a variety of PPE, we do not automatically allocate that piece of equipment to students unless there is a need. This year, fit-tested PPE not needed in clinical settings was sent to Environmental Health and Safety for cleaning and sterilization and then returned to YSN for future use.

#### ***Why doesn't YSN allocate N95 to all students?***

As with all health systems, it is important that we participate in the appropriate use of PPE and respirator optimization so that inventory is available where clinically indicated. Many of our clinical partners provide the necessary PPE to students training at those locations, and some sites indicated they will not allow students to bring in outside PPE. It is really important that we abide by the facility's mandate. When clinical sites do not supply the necessary PPE, YSN will provide, as clinically indicated. Students who require PPE for clinical placements should contact [Tracy Chidsey](#).

#### ***I am confused about PPE provision at YNHH. Why do some students at other schools bring their own PPE to YNHH?***

YNHH has specifically stated to YSN that at the current time, our students should not bring their own PPE and clinically-indicated PPE will be provided by YNHH. There is a great deal of counterfeit PPE on the market, and YNHH wants to ensure quality control. We understand that other trainees may disregard these policies, but YSN has committed to following our clinical partner safety guidelines.

### ***Can I reuse my N95?***

We ask students to check with their clinical site for site-specific protocols regarding PPE and reuse. It is important to note that although it is common to reuse PPE during this pandemic, there is no set number of hours of reuse for all cases. Important factors when reusing PPE: ensuring that the elastic bands are not being stretched out causing a poor fit, checking that the PPE is not dirty or has any tears. Tip – place each N95 in a paper bag and label it to identify it. Rotate the use and mark the number of uses on the bag. The [CDC](#) provides helpful information regarding the efficacious use (and reuse) of PPE.

## **COVID-19 TESTING**

### ***Why are YSN students being required to test weekly?***

We know now that frequent testing is one of the best ways to control the spread of COVID-19. YSN is committed to protecting our healthcare workforce, including student trainees, as well as the communities where we live, work, and learn. As there is an increase in cases in CT and across the country, we are taking extra precautions.

### ***Do all students need to be tested weekly?***

Any student who is accessing campus or participating in YSN-sponsored clinical hours is required to participate in weekly testing, regardless of program or location. Beginning November 16<sup>th</sup>, an email will be sent weekly to remind you of the testing requirement. It will include a [link](#) to document whether you will be on campus or participating in clinical hours. All students are required to test using the [Yale Screening Program](#) unless completing clinical hours out of state (see additional information below regarding out-of-state students).

### ***What if I am out of state for my clinical hours and therefore can't use the Yale Testing program?***

Those students for which it is not feasible to use the Yale Testing program (out of state) can use a non-Yale testing site and submit for reimbursement by sending receipts to [ysnbusinessoffice@yale.edu](mailto:ysnbusinessoffice@yale.edu). YSN will do its very best to expedite payment. Students not using Yale Testing should report their testing compliance results via e-value in Personal Records (same way you enter other immunizations). For each weekly test, you will select *University Covid19 Screening*, from the Ad Hoc field found at bottom of screen – be sure to enter the date. Please feel free to reach out to [Tracy Chidsey](#) if you have any questions.

### ***Does the testing requirement continue during the winter recess?***

Yes, but only if you are engaged in YSN-related clinical hours.

### ***How will you know if we were tested?***

Yale provides a daily compliance report to YSN which includes any student who is expected to be testing (on campus or in clinicals) and has gone > 8 days without testing. This information comes from the Yale Testing program. Students not using Yale Testing because their site is out of Connecticut should report their testing compliance results via e-value.

Note that we are working with Yale Health in looking at options to streamline the testing process for out-of-state students and will keep you posted if new resources become available.

***Do I need to use Yale’s Testing program, or can I use my preferred testing site?***

Yes, all students are required to test using the [Yale Screening Program](#) for the mandatory weekly testing unless completing clinical hours out of state (see additional information regarding out-of-state students).

***Whom do I contact if I have questions regarding the testing requirements?***

Please reach out to YSN’s Health and Safety Leader, Marcia Thomas at [marcia.thomas@yale.edu](mailto:marcia.thomas@yale.edu). For questions regarding e-value, please contact CSU Director, Tracy Chidsey at [Tracy.chidsey@yale.edu](mailto:Tracy.chidsey@yale.edu).

**EXPOSURE AND CONTACT TRACING**

***What do I do if I think I have been exposed to COVID-19?***

Any student who has concerns about potential or known exposure should contact Yale Student Health (203-432-0312), or their primary provider for instruction. Students are also encouraged to contact the Campus COVID Resource Line (CCRL) at 203-432-6604 with any questions or concerns.

***How does contact tracing work at Yale?***

You can visit the Yale’s site that discusses [contact tracing protocols](#), including Yale’s statement on Respect for Your Privacy.

***Will I know who among my peers or faculty test positive for COVID?***

Information about COVID-19 cases anywhere on campus will not be shared except “as needed” to control the spread of COVID-19. At YSN, there are just a few individuals—the Dean and the HSL—who are informed of any isolations or quarantine requirements, and building access is removed for that period. Anyone deemed at risk for exposure will be contacted through the Contact Tracing Program and provided guidance.

***Both myself and a classmate were notified of a potential exposure at our sites (different sites this semester), but we were given different instructions in terms of returning to work and testing protocols. Why?***

Our clinical partner sites develop COVID protocols specific to their locations based on a variety of site-specific data and outcomes. These data are used to make the most timely and informed protocol decisions for its community.

***If I had a potential exposure risk and was told to return to work, how do I keep my personal community safe, such as my roommate?***

We encourage our entire community to develop plans with their families, friends, and roommates in the event of a COVID exposure or positive test. It is important for our faculty and students engaged in clinical education and/or practice to have a safety plan outside of their training or work hours. Recommendations for safety during quarantine and isolation can be found on [Yale’s COVID-19 website](#).

***What do I do if I hear about another student who is not following the compact and/or Yale’s safety protocols?***

If anyone is aware of an infraction to the [Yale Community Commitment](#) or policies, including large gatherings or parties held off campus, we urge you to inform HSL Marcia Thomas ([marcia.thomas@yale.edu](mailto:marcia.thomas@yale.edu)) or make an anonymous or identified report through Yale’s hotline at 877-

360-9253, or online at [your.yale.edu/hotline](https://your.yale.edu/hotline). This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We will then investigate for next steps. This process will assist in keeping our community safe while also limiting the spread of rumors.

***What if I do not feel comfortable returning to my clinical site due to exposure or fear of exposure?***

As a health provider trainee, you have a unique set of learning expectations as compared to other non-health graduate students. Please see additional information by our professional organization that represents all nurses: <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/ana-covid-19-statement/>. Our protocol has consistently been that pre-licensure students will not be assigned known COVID positive cases, although there may be opportunities for you to serve that population should you chose to do so. As nurse trainees and practitioners, you will encounter infectious pathogens throughout your training and career. Scientific literature and evidence-based guidelines have shown that the proper use of PPE, handwashing, and social distancing significantly minimize the risk of infection. This requires vigilance and consistency.

That said, there may be unique circumstances in which you decide you cannot participate in your clinical requirements. If that is the case, your progression toward degree completion may be affected – this would be reviewed on a case by case basis based on your program requirements and clinical hours to date.

If you feel uncomfortable, there are several avenues for expressing your concern, including:

- You may contact the Yale Campus COVID Resource Line at 203-432-6604
- You may speak to your preceptor at your respective clinical training site
- You may contact YSN's Health and Safety Leader, Dr. Marcia Thomas ([marcia.thomas@yale.edu](mailto:marcia.thomas@yale.edu)).
- You may contact YSN's Associate Dean for Student Life and Belonging, Saveena Dhall ([saveena.dhall@yale.edu](mailto:saveena.dhall@yale.edu)), who can provide recommendations for resources that might be helpful to you.
- Dr. Karen Hoffman, mental health & counseling, is available for scheduling at 203.432.0290

**YNHH**

***Where do I access YNHH COVID-19 statistics?***

All students at YNHH have access to YNHH's intranet while at the hospital, using hospital computers. COVID statistics information is listed here, under Quick Links/COVID-19 Resources/System Incident Management Dashboard.

***Why are the instructions after possible exposure different between Yale University and YNHH?***

Yale University and YNHH are separate institutions, and every institution has different guidelines unique to their setting – and these guidelines may periodically change. You should follow the Yale Health advice as it pertains to time spent on campus (i.e., quarantining away from campus) and to the clinical site protocols as it pertains to your precepted clinical site training. Our clinical partners assess their protocols on a regular basis based on a variety of factors, including recent national, local, and site-specific data. Clinical protocols from Yale Health will differ because the Yale Health protocol is addressed

to a broad university audience, not specifically to the role of students as health trainees (where we must rely on the health agencies' protocol).

Students – regardless of YSN program or specialty – who are engaged in required clinical placements should follow the COVID-19 protocols outlined by their respective clinical site as it pertains to their time at that site. Instruction given by that clinical site pertains only to the hours at that site and does not carry over to time on Yale University's campus. Ultimately, be vigilant and keep up on changes in clinical site protocols.

***Whom should I contact at YNHH if I have questions about safety and protocol?***

You can contact Judith Hahn, Director of Professional Practice and Research, YNHH at [Judith.hahn@ynhh.org](mailto:Judith.hahn@ynhh.org).

**TRAVEL**

***Am I allowed to travel outside CT?***

Please visit Yale's guidance on [travel](#), which is updated regularly. Any travel outside of Connecticut prior to November 21<sup>st</sup> is strongly discouraged and should be reserved for emergencies only, unless you need to travel between states for your clinical obligations. In that case, you must follow the quarantine/testing requirements for healthcare workers as outlines in the imbedded link above. Please follow [Yale](#) and [Connecticut COVID-19 travel policies](#) frequently. Students are not required to submit the [Yale Travel form](#) to the YSN HSL between November 21<sup>st</sup> and January 18<sup>th</sup>, but please note that CT travel restrictions change rapidly, and we ask our entire community to stay informed.

**Reminder – whom to contact with questions and links to important information:**

- a. YSN specific COVID-19 questions: YSN's Health and Safety Leader, Marcia Thomas at [marcia.thomas@yale.edu](mailto:marcia.thomas@yale.edu)
- b. General Yale COVID-19 questions: Campus COVID Resource Line at 203-432-6604
- c. Compliance concerns: Yale's hotline at 877-360-9253, or online at [your.yale.edu/hotline](http://your.yale.edu/hotline).
- d. [University COVID-19 Information Page](#)
- e. [Daily Health Check](#)
- f. [COVID-19 Screening Program for Faculty, Staff, and Graduate and Professional Students](#)
- g. [Yale COVID-19 Contact Tracing Program](#)
- h. [University Travel Guidelines](#)
- i. [State of Connecticut Travel Advisory](#)