

AUCC Student Health and Wellness Center

## AUCC Respiratory Virus Health and Safety Guidelines

### Purpose

These guidelines provide recommendations to help protect the health and well-being of the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) community and reduce the spread and impact of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, influenza (flu), and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV).

These guidelines apply to students, faculty, staff, and visitors across AUCC member institutions.

### Preventing Respiratory Illness

Respiratory viruses can spread throughout the year. Taking simple preventive steps can help protect you and others and reduce illness within the AUCC community.

- **Stay current with recommended vaccinations.** Vaccination against respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza, can help reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.
- **Practice good hygiene.** Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer when soap and water are unavailable. Cover coughs and sneezes and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Improve indoor air.** Increase ventilation, use appropriate air filtration, or gather outdoors when possible.
- **Wear a well-fitting mask when appropriate.** Consider wearing a mask when you are sick or recovering, have recently been exposed to a respiratory illness, or respiratory illness activity is elevated.
- **Test when appropriate.** Testing can help identify COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory illnesses and may help guide treatment and prevention decisions.

### When You Are Sick

If you are sick or test positive for a respiratory illness:

- **Report your illness.** Students who test positive for a respiratory illness should complete the AUCC Student Health and Wellness Center [self-reporting form](#).
- **Limit close contact with others as much as possible while you are sick.** If you live in campus housing or share living spaces, take practical steps to protect roommates and others, including wearing a well-fitting mask in shared spaces and avoiding close contact when possible.
- **Resume your usual activities when, for at least 24 hours,** your symptoms are improving overall, **and** you have been fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication.
- **Take added precautions for the next 5 days** to reduce the risk of spreading illness to others.
- **If your fever returns or your symptoms worsen,** limit close contact with others again until you meet the criteria above and contact the [AUCC Student Health & Wellness Center](#) at (404) 756-1241 or through the [patient portal](#) for guidance.

### If You Are at Increased Risk

Individuals at increased risk for severe illness should contact the [AUCC Student Health & Wellness Center](#) at (404) 756-1241 or through the [patient portal](#) promptly if they become sick. Treatment for some respiratory illnesses works best when started early.

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### **When to Seek Emergency Medical Care**

Most respiratory illnesses are mild and can be managed at home; however, some symptoms require immediate medical attention.

**Seek emergency medical care immediately** if you experience:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Pale, gray, or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds, depending on skin tone

**Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department for these or other severe or concerning symptoms.**

### **Need help?**

Contact the [AUCC Student Health & Wellness Center](#) at (404) 756-1241 or through the [patient portal](#) if you have questions, need medical guidance, or need assistance accessing care.

### **Question about these guidelines?**

Contact Kara Garretson–AUCC Sr. Epidemiologist, Infection Prevention & Control Safety Officer at [kgarretson@msm.edu](mailto:kgarretson@msm.edu).

*These guidelines may be updated based on current public health recommendations and respiratory illness activity.*