

UM protocol regarding COVID-19 infections as of 1 June 2020

The UM buildings that are being opened have been arranged in such a way that it is possible to work and study while maintaining a minimum distance of 1.5 metres. Employees and students are repeatedly being reminded of the need to stay at home if they experience symptoms themselves or if they live with anyone who has tested positive. It is also being well-communicated that hygiene measures and the 1.5-metre distance must be observed. In those exceptional cases where the 1.5-metre distance cannot be maintained due to the nature of the work or the form of education (assessment), personal protective equipment can be used. The risk of infection at UM is limited due to the above measures. This risk is further reduced by the fact that COVID-19 tests can be administered as of 1 June 2020 and extensive contact and source tracing can be carried out by the Municipal Health Service (GGD).

From then on, anyone living in the Netherlands with (mild) corona-like symptoms* can be tested for COVID-19 by the GGD. This can be done without a referral from a company doctor or general practitioner; one can assess the need for testing oneself. An appointment to get a test in the region can be made by calling the national hotline 0800-1202. There are two test locations in Limburg: the car park next to the Van der Valk hotel in Urmond and the Nijmeegseweg in Venlo. If students encounter any problems to get to these test locations, they can contact their study advisor. The result of the test will follow within 24 hours. Cross-border workers living in Germany can be tested by their own GP if they experience corona-like symptoms. Cross-border workers living in Belgium can, with a referral from their GP, be tested at a local triage centre in their region.

If there is a positive result, the GGD will carry out source and contact tracing. The source tracing focuses on finding out which contact may have infected the patient who tested positive before their symptoms developed, to ensure that this person gets tested and goes into quarantine. Contact tracing, on the other hand, focuses on finding out who this newly infected patient may have come into contact with while he or she was already contagious; this includes two days before the symptoms developed until the time the test was taken. For this source and contact tracing, the GGD will follow the protocol of the National Coordination Centre for Communicable Disease Control (LCI). Within 24 hours after the patient tests positive, the contact tracing will focus on identifying all contacts belonging to three categories. The next step is that the GGD will inform these contacts about their recent contact with the patient who tested positive, give them specific advice and possibly impose measures (depending on the type of contact: e.g. roommates have to be quarantined).

* The most common coronavirus symptoms¹:

- fever (38 degrees or higher) or a feverish feeling
- coughing without mucus
- phlegm
- fatigue
- difficulty or rapid breathing, e.g. when walking
- sore throat
- cold
- muscle and joint pain
- headache
- chest pain

¹ Thuisarts.nl

Three contact types that are included in the GGD contact tracing ²

1) Roommates: are contacts who live in the same living environment and have had prolonged contact with the patient at a distance of less than 1.5 metres.

2) Those considered as other close contacts:

a) Individuals who have had prolonged contact with the patient **for more than 15 minutes at a distance of less than 1.5 metres** during the contagious period. The contagious period begins 2 days before the onset of symptoms and ends when the patient is symptom-free for 24 hours and at least 7 days after the onset of symptoms. Airplane contacts (within 2 seats in every direction from the patient), travelling companions and staff who worked in the same compartment as the patient are also considered 'other close contacts'.

b) In circumstances where there was a high-risk exposure of **less than 15 minutes** (e.g. coughing in the face or direct physical contact such as kissing), this person is also considered to be an 'other close contact'.

3) Other (not close) contacts: are individuals who had prolonged contact (**more than 15 minutes**) with the patient at a distance of **more than 1.5 metres** in the same room, for example at the office, in a classroom or during a meeting.

For UM, this means that employees and students can be confident that they will be informed by the GGD as soon as possible if they have been at risk of being infected at UM, even if this is related to a colleague or student who tested positive and lives in Germany or Belgium, for example. The counterpart of the GGD in those countries will report to the GGD the name of any employee/student who tests positive for COVID-19, so that the GGD can contact this person to start the contact tracing for contacts that took place in the Netherlands.

The entire contact tracing process is carried out by the GGD, including informing employees and fellow students with whom a recent contact took place. The employer/educational institution is not informed about this.

Employees or students who are required by the GGD to remain in compulsory quarantine for 14 days (if they themselves, a housemate or another close contact tests positive) in principle only have to report their absence to their manager or teacher if they are expected to be at UM during the quarantine period.

Employees who are unable to work from home due to illness will report their illness to their manager in accordance with UM's usual sick leave procedure.

For students who experience difficulties and/or a possible study delay because they or someone in their immediate environment is infected by the coronavirus/COVID-19, they should discuss this with their study adviser as soon as possible; see link <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/support/during-your-studies/student-guidance/study-advisers>.

Reporting a positive COVID-19 test result to UM is not obligatory! However, in the interest of monitoring a safe working environment at UM, reporting this to a supervisor or study adviser is appreciated. After obtaining permission from the employee or student, they will report this to the head of UM's Occupational Health Care office via corona@maastrichtuniversity.nl, leaving out the employee or student's name but stating the department/study programme that he or she is part of.

² lci.rivm.nl/COVID-19-bco.

Employees or students who test positive are only allowed to return to UM after a period of at least 7 days after the symptoms start and at least 24 hours after the symptoms stop.