Ball State University COVID-19 Screening, Testing, and Contact Tracing Protocols

Effective July 24, 2020
Last Updated on May 5, 2021
I. Overview

Having students, employees, and visitors on campus during this pandemic requires Ball State University to continue implementing various procedures and protocols in order to create a safe place to work and learn. In that respect, screening for symptoms of COVID-19, along with testing for the virus, is considered to be of great importance, and the University is engaged in both regular screening and testing to mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 in our community.

As a result of a Service Agreement with Indiana University Health, the University’s Student Health Center is equipped to provide health services, including screening and testing for COVID-19 to currently enrolled students who are symptomatic. Employees should seek medical care from their primary care providers. The Employee Quick Clinic at the Health Center is equipped to provide services in cases where an employee does not have access to a primary care physician.

II. Screening for COVID-19

The University has implemented the following screening protocols:

1. Employees who have been authorized to return to work on campus are required to complete a self-certification form prior to returning. The form asks certain screening questions about the employee’s health, including, among other items, whether the employee has had a recent fever or other COVID-19 symptoms or has been notified of exposure to COVID-19 within the last 14 days. An employee will again be required to complete the form prior to returning to campus if, for example, the employee tests positive for COVID-19 or has close contact in the last 14 days with an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19.

2. Employees and students must monitor symptoms every day before reporting to campus for work or school.

3. If COVID-19 symptoms—such as a fever greater than 100.4 or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, headache, new loss of taste/smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose—are present (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.), employees should not come to work and students should not come to campus (including going to class and attending co-curricular activities).

4. Employees and students who display any symptoms related to COVID-19 (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.) should seek medical care. Free resources to assist employees and students in determining if medical care should be sought include the CDC’s Coronavirus Self-Checker and IU Health’s Symptom Checker.

5. Additional screening measures, including temperature checks, may also be implemented in certain contexts, including, for example, residential students, student-athletes returning to practice, and specific academic programs.

7. Visitors are also expected to monitor symptoms before coming to campus and are asked to delay their visit if experiencing any. Please review the Campus Visitors Plan for more details.
III. Testing for COVID-19

The University makes multiple testing options available to students and employees, both symptomatic and asymptomatic, as described below. When reviewing this information, note that polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing and antigen testing identify current infection with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), while antibody testing identifies whether an individual has already been exposed to the virus in the past and has developed antibodies (but not whether the individual is currently infected). At this time, the University does not offer antibody testing.

More information about getting tested on campus, including times and locations, is available on the Get Tested webpage.

1. Symptomatic Testing
   The University provides symptomatic PCR testing through an agreement with IU Health that offers testing seven days a week. Consistent with the current testing protocols in the State of Indiana, this PCR testing is available for individuals who think they have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop symptoms.

   a. Students who experience COVID-19 symptoms (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.) should seek immediate medical care. Students may call the Student Health Center at 765-285-8431 to schedule an appointment. Students experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms should immediately inform staff to ensure that proper referrals can be made.

   b. Employees who experience COVID-19 symptoms (without a separate diagnosed cause, e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.) should seek immediate medical care. Employees should contact their primary care provider to schedule an appointment. The Employee Quick Clinic is an option for employees who have an urgent need and a primary care provider is not available.

   c. Students and employees are required to follow the advice and instructions of their health care provider.

2. Asymptomatic Testing
   Effective May 17, we recommend registering for an appointment for asymptomatic testing through the Indiana State Department of Health website. You may register for testing at an Optum/LHI site or a Community Test Site. COVID-19 testing at these sites is free. The Community Testing Site for Delaware County is at Open Door Health Services at 333 S. Madison St. Testing is only available by appointment.

   The Optum/LHI site is at 401 N. Country Club Rd. Testing is available by walk-in or appointment.

3. Additional Testing by the University
   The University will also utilize directed testing as a proactive mitigation strategy. Directed testing is used to identify positive cases and mitigate the transmission of the virus among a select group of student or employees. Examples of when directed testing may be used include, but are not limited to, an outbreak of COVID-19 or if several employees or students in a particular group or location become ill. Due to the nature of directed testing, it may be appropriate to test all individuals within an area, including those who are not experiencing symptoms. Decisions regarding directed testing will be made in consultation with public health officials.
When the University employs directed testing, the designated students and/or employees will be contacted by the University and provided with instructions, including being referred to University provided testing. Participating in directed testing will be required unless the student or employee meets one or more of the pre-determined exceptions to directed testing, which will be communicated at the time the individual is notified of being included in directed testing.

IV. Student Pre-Arrival Testing Protocol for Spring 2021

1. Requirements
   Every student was required to:
   a. Submit a COVID-19 test result administered within seven (7) days before arriving on campus; and
   b. Self-quarantine between the date the test is administered and the return to campus.

Students obtained testing through local health care providers, private testing options, or options available through the Indiana State Department of Health. Specific information about testing locations and the availability of free testing was provided on our website.

After obtaining test results, students uploaded an image of the test result to the University designated confidential testing result portal. The portal opened on January 8, 2021. Students were advised to direct technical questions regarding the use of the portal to the Help Desk at 765-285-1517.

A. Negative Test Results
   1. Students with a negative test result residing in University residence halls received confirmation of their designated move-in time. Students were advised to direct questions regarding Housing move-in to the Office of Housing and Residence Life at housing@bsu.edu or call 765-285-8000.
   2. Students with a negative test result living off campus returned to campus on January 19, 2021 as scheduled.

B. Positive Test Results
   1. Students with a positive test result were provided with appropriate instructions to isolate prior to returning to campus.
   2. Consistent with the current protocol, instructors were advised when a student in an instructor's course was in isolation, and students were encouraged to work directly with their instructors to make arrangements for academic work during isolation.
   3. Students who tested positive were instructed to isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and that they must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications before returning to campus.

C. Exceptions to Pre-Arrival Protocol
   A student was not required to submit a pre-arrival test result if one of the following applied:

   1. The student tested positive for COVID-19 in the 90-day period prior to returning to campus for Spring 2021, and the positive test result had been provided to the University through IU Health, the health department or a self-report using the University's COVID-19 self reporting form available here; or
2. The student is enrolled entirely online for the Spring 2021 semester, is not residing in the residence halls, and will not be physically present on campus in the spring semester; or
3. The student was approved for an exception by the Director of the Health Center.

D. Compliance
Students were required to comply with this protocol unless the student met the criteria for an exception. Students who failed to submit the test results were not permitted to move-in to the residence halls and did not have academic access until a test result was submitted.

V. Contact Tracing
Contact tracing is a critical component of the response to a positive test of COVID-19. To that end, Ball State has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Delaware County Health Department which gives the University the authority to engage in contact tracing. If a student or employee receives a positive test through IU Health or the Student Health Center, or self-reports a positive test to the University, the individual will be contacted by a Ball State contact tracer.

During the initial conversation, the individual is queried regarding close contacts (defined as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or longer over a 24-hour period in the two days before they developed symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19). The individuals identified as close contacts are then contacted by a Ball State contact tracer and informed they have been exposed. The name of the individual who may have been the source of exposure is not identified at any time in this process.

Individuals are strongly encouraged to answer the call from the contact tracer and cooperate in providing the requested information. If the individual has caller ID, the phone will display the caller as ‘BSU COVID TEAM’ or (765) 285-7662.

In addition to Ball State contact tracers, individuals who test positive may also be contacted by contact tracers from the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH). Typically, ISDH will send a text message from 877-548-3444, and then follow-up with a phone call. The number on the caller ID will show as 833-670-0067 or may display as “IN Health COVID.” Again, individuals are strongly encouraged to cooperate with contact tracers from ISDH in order to assist in protecting the health of others who may have been exposed.

More information can be found in the Testing and Contact Tracing FAQs.

VI. Return to Work and Campus Activities after Diagnosis/Illness
While the CDC recommends a 14-day quarantine period as the safest strategy, the most recent guidance provides that the quarantine period can end after 10 days if the person experiences no symptoms. Consistent with this CDC guidance, when an individual is instructed to quarantine (due to exposure to someone who is or may be positive for COVID-19), that individual may end their quarantine after 10 days from the date of exposure (or, if the exact date of exposure is unknown, 10 days from the date of being instructed to quarantine) if they do not experience COVID-19 symptoms. In situations like this where quarantine is ended after 10 days due to not experiencing any symptoms, the person must continue to monitor for symptoms until 14 days after exposure. Individuals who develop symptoms after stopping quarantine must immediately isolate and contact a healthcare provider.
When an individual is instructed to isolate (due to a positive test), the individual is responsible for isolating in one of the following manners: (1) isolate for 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, and with improvement of other symptoms; or (2) for persons who never develop symptoms, isolate for 10 days after testing positive; or (3) if under the care of a health care provider, in a manner consistent with the health care provider’s instructions. Upon completion of the quarantine or isolation period, the individual may return to work, classes, and campus. Employees (including student employees) will also be required to complete the self-certification form prior to returning to campus after a diagnosis of COVID-19 or after being identified as a close contact of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days. Supervisors should not ask for information or documentation beyond the self-certification.

VII. Faculty Guidance for Students Return to the Classroom after Quarantine and Isolation

In situations where a student may be required to quarantine or isolate, the student’s instructors of record will be provided with a standard notice of absence indicating that the student will be absent from class for an unknown period of time. When the student is able to do so, the student will be expected to coordinate with the instructor a plan for continuing their education. The instructor is expected to work with the student on such a plan. The instructor may set a deadline by which missed coursework is to be completed. Furthermore, while the student may disclose information regarding their situation to the instructor, a student’s medical situation is private and confidential. As such, the instructor should not ask for or require medical documentation, either to prove the viability of the absence or to allow the student to return to class.

VIII. Dashboard

The University has created an online dashboard to communicate information about COVID-19 on our campus. To be transparent, the dashboard provides data collected from IU Health, third party on-campus testing sources, and self-reports from both students and employees. The dashboard is updated daily and includes information about the number of people tested, the number of positive cases, estimated active cases, estimated recovered cases, and quarantine and isolation capacity. People are encouraged to visit the dashboard for updated information and related FAQs.