

COVID-19 Testing for Students



Myth

Fact

Testing is painful.

[Proactive Community Testing \(PCT\)](#) is using a painless [saliva-based method](#). It is as simple as spitting into a tube. And the nasal swab used for symptomatic testing at UHS only goes as far as the inside of your nostril and is relatively painless, too.

I could get in trouble for testing positive.

You will NOT be punished if you test positive for COVID-19. Punitive measures are not a great way to get people to adopt healthy behaviors. Getting through this pandemic together is not about placing blame and shame; it's about supporting and protecting each other.

If too many members of my organization test positive, it will be announced publicly.

The university is bound by privacy laws that prohibit us from sharing details such as addresses or names of organizations when announcing clusters.

It takes forever to get results.

Typical turnaround for [PCT](#) testing is 1-2 days. Results can be accessed independently on the [MyUHS portal](#); log in, click on Medical Records, then select the Labs tab. For testing at UHS, the turnaround time is either same day or 1 business day, depending on the test used.

I will get kicked out if I test positive.

You will not be kicked out for testing positive. You will be required to self-isolate off campus, but you can return to campus when your isolation period ends. And if you feel up to it, you can continue to participate in class remotely while in isolation.

I don't have symptoms, so I'm not sick and can't infect others.

You can have COVID-19 and not experience any symptoms. Additionally, you can spread the virus to others even though you are asymptomatic.

Students are not at high risk for severe illness.

Okay, so this one is true. Most students are at lower risk. But not all. There are students on campus who have conditions such as diabetes that put them at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19—and some students have been hospitalized because of the virus. Additionally, as you move about campus and Austin, it is likely you will come in contact with non-students who could be high risk.

I'll have to pay for testing.

There is no cost for [Proactive Community Testing](#) or [testing at UHS](#).

There are long lines.

Lines move quickly at [PCT](#). Most participants are able to complete the entire testing process in about 15 minutes after joining in line.

I already participated in PCT so I don't need to do it again.

Participation in [PCT](#) throughout the semester is critical. Frequent participation is encouraged, as long as you wait 7 days between tests (unless you receive a notification of exposure, in which case, you can be tested sooner than 7 days).

If I test off campus or out of Travis County, no one at UT will find out.

All results are eventually collected and end up with UT Contact Tracing Team as a part of Austin Public Health. Testing outside only puts your friends and families and other close contacts at more risk because our ability to interrupt a chain of disease spread is slowed.

If I test positive, I'm on my own to navigate isolation or academic accommodations.

UT has a whole team available to help you. They can assist with isolation resources, classes or work leave and will also do case investigation and contact tracing with you. [Complete the self-reporting form](#) or call the Behavioral Concerns and COVID Advice Line (BCCAL) at 512-232-5050 (Option 2).

I'm fully vaccinated so I no longer need to get tested.

The vaccine protects against but does not completely prevent COVID-19. It is possible to still become infected with COVID-19 after being vaccinated, and we are still learning the degree to which vaccinated individuals may be able to spread the virus to others if they become infected.

