

Outdoor Time for those in Isolation or Quarantine for COVID-19 at Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs)

October 21, 2020

VDH recognizes the health benefits of spending time outdoors during isolation and quarantine for COVID-19. However, care must be taken to protect others from possible exposure to COVID-19. The guidance below is meant to assist IHEs in safely operationalizing time outdoors for students living in campus housing who are in isolation or quarantine.

IHE Students in Quarantine for COVID-19

- IHEs may designate an area outside of the housing unit/dorm to allow students in quarantine to enjoy time outdoors.
 - If the housing unit/dorm has a contained outdoor courtyard that is not accessible to the general IHE community, that area can be used by students in quarantine.
 - If the housing unit/dorm does not have a contained outdoor courtyard, steps can be taken to demarcate an area outside that can be used by students in quarantine, ensuring that members of the general IHE community are not entering the quarantine area.
 - It is critical that the outside areas are not used as a way for people in quarantine to congregate and that there is adequate distancing among people. IHEs might need to consider monitoring these areas.
 - The best way to minimize risk is to have a designated outdoor area for students in quarantine. However, if IHEs are unable to designate an outdoor area, students in quarantine may go on a short walk around the building but must ensure they do not interact with anyone.
- IHEs should advise students in quarantine to take the steps below when spending time outdoors.
 - Before leaving your room:
 - Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used if your hands are visibly dirty. If you do not have immediate access to a sink, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Put on a face covering or facemask, and wear it at all times while you are outside of your room.
 - While outside of your room:
 - At all times, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others and wear a face covering or facemask while outside of your room.
 - Avoid interacting or engaging with others, given the risk of possible exposure for you and them.
 - To the extent possible, avoid touching any objects that are used by others including door handles and objects in common spaces.
 - Only go from your room directly to the outdoor location at the quarantine site. You may not use common areas inside your building (e.g., lobby, lounge, game room, etc.).
 - Immediately return to your room if you start to feel ill or if you develop any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (even if very mild).

IHE Students in Isolation for COVID-19

For students who are well enough to spend time outdoors and who are being housed in isolation dorms or individual housing units where they will not encounter other individuals in the general IHE population:

- IHEs may designate an area outside of the isolation dorm or housing unit to allow students in isolation to enjoy time outdoors.
 - If the isolation dorm or housing unit has a contained outdoor courtyard that is not accessible to the general IHE community, that area can be used by students in isolation.
 - If the isolation dorm or housing unit does not have a contained outdoor courtyard, steps can be taken to demarcate an area outside that can be used by students in isolation, ensuring that members of the general IHE community are not entering the isolation area.
 - It is critical that the outside areas are not used as a way for people in isolation to congregate and that there is adequate distancing among people. IHEs might need to consider monitoring these areas.
 - It is not advised for isolated individuals in congregate or high-density settings to leave the designated isolation area to take a walk.
- IHEs should advise students in isolation to take the steps below when spending time outdoors.
 - Before leaving your room:
 - Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used if your hands are visibly dirty. If you do not have immediate access to a sink, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Put on a face covering or facemask, and wear it at all times while you are outside of your room.
 - While outside of your room:
 - At all times, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others and wear a face covering or facemask while outside of your room.
 - Avoid interacting or engaging with others given the risk of possible exposure for you and them.
 - To the extent possible, avoid touching any objects that are used by others including door handles and objects in common spaces.
 - Only go from your room directly to an outdoor location at the isolation site. You may not use common areas inside your building (e.g., lobby, lounge, game room, etc.).
 - Immediately return to your room if your symptoms worsen. If you need to seek healthcare, be sure to call ahead to a medical care provider before arriving for treatment.