How does the virus spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet). The droplets can also land on surfaces and be transmitted when someone touches the surface and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.

COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in many affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

How do I protect myself?

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home. If possible, maintain 6 feet (about two arms’ length) from other people. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.

Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they go out in public. This does not apply to children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020)

Will hand sanitizing stations be placed throughout campus?

Yes, hand sanitizing stations will be placed at all building entrances and will be available in most departments.

Will everyone be required to wear a face-covering while on campus?

All UMES employees, students, contractual employees, and visitors will be required to wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose while on campus in public places. Additionally, UMES expects that all employees, students, and visitors will exercise personal health and hygiene precautions including handwashing, maintaining physical distancing, monitoring individual health daily, and seeking medical attention if warranted.

How will policies regarding face coverings and physical distancing be enforced?

Our plan for returning to campus relies completely on the full understanding, support, and cooperation of every member of the UMES community. Individual personal and social responsibility and adherence
to guidelines should only serve to enhance the safety and well-being of our entire community. We have developed several mechanisms and training to remind people of the public health and safety requirements and their role in ensuring that we all remain safe. Anyone disregarding our guidelines will be subject to the University Code of Conduct provisions outlined for faculty, staff, and students.

**What are some considerations when returning to work?**

The risk of COVID-19 spreading is greater the more you are in close contact with others and the longer the interaction.

Stay home if you may have been around someone with COVID-19, explore teleworking options if you are at increased risk for severe illness, and reduce the number and length of interactions with other, people you come in contact with if possible.

Practice preventive actions such as washing your hands frequently (or using hand sanitizer), social distancing, and wearing a mask.

More information on considerations for returning to work can be found here: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-lifecoping/returning-to-work.html#returning

**What should I do about class if I have a fever in the morning?**

You should report the fever to the Student Health Center via the methods indicated by UMES. The Student Health Center will provide instructions on procedures for your personal health. You should also contact your course instructor and notify them of the situation so arrangements for future classwork can be made.

**What happens if a member of the UMES community tests positive for COVID-19?**

Self-monitoring protocols will be used daily. Once a member of the UMES community is suspected and/or receives a positive COVID-19 test, mandatory isolation is put into effect. Through communication with the University Administration, Student Health Center, and the Somerset County Health Department, the individual, and, if necessary, anyone that came in contact with that individual will be required to self-isolate or quarantine. An appropriate healthcare provider will conduct necessary testing per public health guidelines. Coordination with public health officials will determine if any closure(s) (longterm or short-term) are required. Physical Plant staff will be notified and cleaning and disinfecting of all areas visited will be undertaken.

**What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?**

Quarantine keeps someone who was in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 away from others. Isolation keeps someone who is sick or tested positive for COVID-19 without symptoms away from others, even in their own home.