
To: All PG Learners, Residency Program Directors, Fellowship Directors, FM Site Directors, Vice Chairs Education, Departmental Chairs
Cc: Program Administrators, PGME Staff

Dear PG Learners and Colleagues,

Sharing with you the guidance from UHN regarding requirements for learners who may be travelling.

Sincerely,

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Sent of behalf of

Dr. John Granton, Interim Medical Director, Health Services

Dr. Susy Hota, Medical Director, IPAC

Dr. Brad Wouters, Executive Vice-President, Science & Research

COVID-19 Update as of December 3, 2021 at 10:15 a.m.

Purpose of today's message:

- COVID-19 variant of concern (VOC) Omicron – Additional requirements for all UHN staff returning from international travel, including the United States
- [One-pager of Additional Requirements available here](#)

Other trusted resources:

- [COVID-19 Intranet page](#): Visit for the most up-to-date information.
- **Additional questions?** Contact your supervisor or IPAC@uhn.ca.

Background: A new SARS-CoV-2 variant of concern, Omicron, was identified in South Africa on

November 24, 2021. Multiple countries have now reported cases of Omicron, some with local community transmission. The Government of Canada has updated travel guidance and implemented a travel restrictions to some countries as a means to mitigate further spread of the variant. Given this development, UHN is updating guidance for staff returning from international travel, including the United States, based on current information available.

Thank you to all of TeamUHN for following these additional requirements to ensure the safety of our patients, visitors and colleagues during this evolving situation.

- **Latest Updates:**

- **What do we know about Omicron so far?**

- There is speculation that Omicron may be more transmissible and demonstrate “immune escape,” meaning that people may experience re-infections or be less protected by current COVID-19 vaccines. However, these features have not yet been confirmed or measured. Severity of infection is still unknown.
- Canada has identified several travel-related cases to date, in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia. While the situation is rapidly evolving, community transmission of Omicron has not yet been established in the GTA and all cases in Canada so far have been related to travel.

- **What guidance has the Government of Canada issued about international travel?**

- On November 26, and 30 2021 the Government of Canada issued a number of travel restrictions and conditions related to the emergence of Omicron.
- Specific travel restrictions were issued for people coming from 10 African nations and a statement of extra caution was made for any international travel (<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>). **Note:** this list is subject to change.
- **Canadians returning from countries under restriction:** The Canadian government requires that all Canadians returning from travel from the countries under restrictions have pre-entry, arrival, and Day 8 testing (3 tests), as well as quarantine for 14 days from arrival to Canada.
- **Canadians arriving from countries not under advisory (excluding the United States) ****see next section for requirements for TeamUHN**:**** The Canadian government requires that all people entering Canada from outside of the countries under restriction take a pre-entry and arrival PCR test for COVID-19.
 - **Unvaccinated** individuals require additional measures, including quarantine for 14 days and PCR testing on Day 8.
 - **Vaccinated** individuals must quarantine until they receive a negative arrival COVID-19 PCR test. These requirements may change.
- **Canadians returning from the United States:** Fully vaccinated travellers arriving in Canada from the U.S. are currently exempt from the PCR test under the federal guidelines. **However, any UHN staff who travel to the U.S. will need to follow the additional testing requirements implemented at UHN as outlined below.**

- **What does this mean for UHN staff (including research appointees, volunteers, learners) who choose to travel internationally (including the United States)?**

- UHN has always required that TeamUHN follow the [federal guidelines for international travel](#).
- Given the greatest risk of acquiring Omicron remains related to international travel, **UHN is instituting additional requirements for TeamUHN members who choose**

- to travel internationally (including to the United States).
 - A formal policy will come soon.
 - Any staff with international travel plans should follow instructions below as of today.
- UHN is recommending remote work wherever possible for the 10 days upon return from international travel (including the U.S.) – **this must be prearranged with your manager/leader PRIOR to travel.**
- UHN’s additional requirements for staff returning from international travel are as follows:
 1. **Any staff returning from countries currently under restriction (please search by destination):** Individuals must follow public health and federal guidelines and quarantine for 14 days from arrival in Canada.
 2. **Any staff travelling outside of Canada must (formal policy to come):**
 - i. **Before your departure:**
 - [Notify Health Services of travel before your departure.](#)
 - Notifying Health Services at the link above will trigger the request for rapid antigen testing kits which must be picked up before your departure.
 - ii. **After your return:**
 - [Report your testing results before coming onsite by using this link.](#)
 3. **After return from travel, any staff returning from countries not under restriction, including the United States:**
 - **Staff who can work remotely:** are asked to do so, for the 10 days after their return and self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. A [PCR test at the TW CAC](#) is required on Day 8 post return to Canada.
 - **Staff who are required to work on-site:** must perform daily rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 from the day of arrival into Canada up to Day 10 post-arrival. Staff may continue to work at UHN sites as long as their rapid antigen tests are negative. A [PCR test at the TW CAC](#) is required on Day 8 post return to Canada.
 - **Staff who perform a hybrid of working from home and on-site work:** rapid antigen tests are required on the days working at a UHN site for 10 days post-arrival from travel. [Report your testing results before coming onsite by using this link.](#) A [PCR test at the TW CAC](#) is required on Day 8 post return to Canada.
 - **A diagram of the additional requirements is available here.**
 - **Note:** Day-8 PCR test can **only** be accommodated at the [TW CAC](#).
 4. The screening app (uhnscreen.ca) will be updated to reflect these changes with additional questions related to recent travel.
- **For all above roles:** If symptoms consistent with COVID-19 develop, *even mild or atypical symptoms* such as headache, fatigue and muscle aches, OR if a rapid antigen test is positive, the staff member must get a PCR COVID-19 test immediately, self-isolate at home, and report to [Health Services](#).
- A reminder that this is an evolving situation, and that guidelines regarding travel and/or quarantine could change without advance notice either by the Government of Canada or UHN.