



Sept. 9, 2021

Dear UMB Community:

University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) President Bruce E. Jarrell's [Sept. 2 letter](#) shared that there would be an update this week about safety measures at UMB related to COVID-19. After consideration by the Recovery Task Force's University Health focus area group, changes to policies regarding face coverings/masks as well as food and drink at indoor events are outlined below.

Face Covering/Mask Policy Change

To increase safety on campus, UMB is moving to require or encourage the use of KN95 masks, instead of surgical or cloth face coverings, as outlined below, in nonclinical settings (clinical settings maintain separate requirements). A KN95 mask is designed to reduce the amount of dust or virus a person breathes in by approximately 95 percent.

A KN95 provides better protection for the wearer than a cloth mask while also reducing the spread of the virus from the wearer. Importantly, a person wearing a KN95 who had a recent close contact with a person who tested positive with COVID-19 is less likely to develop COVID-19. As such, **KN95s generally reduce or eliminate self-isolation or quarantine requirements, which is particularly important in classroom environments with students sitting in a communal setting for long periods of time.** This is another measure to ensure that we are keeping ourselves and our UMB community safe, while minimizing interruptions to education and work. We will re-evaluate the KN95 requirement in the coming months.

UMB will provide an initial KN95 mask to each person through each school/unit. Your school/unit will provide direction on how to receive your KN95, but please feel free to provide your own. They are readily available online and in many local retailers. KN95s, while disposable, are designed to be worn multiple times safely.

When should I wear a KN95? The UMB Policy Requiring Use of Face Coverings outlines when a person is required to wear a face covering at UMB. The policy specifically requires or recommends a KN95 as follows:

- KN95s are the only permitted face covering for unvaccinated faculty, staff, and students – whether they have a valid exemption or not. As such, starting Sept. 15, unvaccinated employees and students must wear a KN95 when required to wear a face covering under the [**UMB Policy Requiring Use of Face Coverings**](#).
- At some point in the near future, KN95s will be required for fully vaccinated students, faculty, and staff when participating in classroom and training activities. Fully vaccinated faculty or staff delivering in-person lectures or presentations may remove their KN95 while speaking as long as at least 6 feet of physical distance can be maintained between the faculty member or presenter and the students or audience. Faculty or staff who are not vaccinated must wear a KN95 while presenting. The date of this requirement will depend on the availability and distribution of KN95s across campus and will be communicated as soon as that date is known.
- Starting immediately, KN95s are strongly recommended for fully vaccinated students, faculty, and staff when participating in group activities where 6 feet of physical distance cannot be maintained or more than five people are present.

UMB COVID-19 Guidance on Events, Eating, and Drinking

As of Sept. 20, 2021, UMB indoor events may not provide food that is intended to be eaten at the event – only grab-and-go food and beverages will be permitted. This will minimize the need to remove masks while in group settings and thereby reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 on campus.

What other actions should I take?

To protect yourself and others, you should:

- Get the COVID-19 vaccine if you have not already done so. The vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family, friends, classmates, and co-workers from COVID-19.
 - Stay home if you are sick or have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Call the UMB COVID-19 Hotline at 1-800-701-9863 if you have COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Practice physical distancing when feasible.
 - Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
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