

The Student Guide to COVID-19 Safety

Hillside Health Care
International





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Student Policy and Procedure for COVID-19 Pandemic Safety

In regards to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Hillside Clinic strives to meet the health safety needs as mandated by the Ministry of Health of Belize and the recommendations of the CDC and the WHO. Given the community spread of COVID-19 in the world, this document is intended to address the ways in which you will be able to safely travel into and within the country of Belize, learn and provide care to our patients, and interact with our staff, the community and each other.

For students whose health conditions make you a high risk for complications if you contract COVID-19, it is important that you understand that Hillside Clinic and the national healthcare system in Belize is limited in what they can provide in severe COVID-19 disease. The nearest hospital in Punta Gorda is not equipped with an ICU and has only basic medications. For critical care requiring intubation, patients are transferred to the Southern Regional Hospital in Dangriga or on to a hospital in Belize City before symptoms become worse. Travel out of the country with suspicion of Covid would also be problematic, at best. Therefore, for your own protection, and for the protection of our Belizean staff and patients, we would strongly urge that you are either immunized against Covid, or have proof of prior infection (positive IgG). Once the Covid vaccine is widely available, this will likely be a requirement for working in the clinic.

Following, you will find the policies Hillside Clinic is implementing for COVID-19 safety during your time with us. These policies were created with input from a number of resources including the CDC, WHO, American Universities and Hillside Medical personnel/board members.

Lawful Termination:

- Upon reasonable notice, Hillside may terminate rotation contracts due to public health emergency needs. Termination may be the result of non-compliance with isolation/quarantine recommendations; failure to adhere to campus directives for wearing face coverings; physical distancing; and other COVID related restrictions published in this document.
- Your rotation at Hillside may be terminated due to public health emergencies. Hillside will consider reimbursements for impacted students as appropriate and based on the information available at that time.



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Travel to and from Hillside:

- Download the app for traveling into Belize found here: <https://belizing.com/Belize-Health-App/#:~:text=The%20Belize%20Travel%20Health%20App.screening%20for%20entry%20into%20Belize>
- <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/id1526504478> (from the app store)
- *Notice to all Android Users: Please ensure that you have downloaded and installed the most current version of the Belize Travel Health App (Version 1.09 or newer), to avoid technical difficulties.*
- Follow Belize travel guidelines for entering the country:
 - Present proof of antibody immunity to COVID-19 OR proof of vaccination for COVID-19 at the Belize City Airport
 - Show proof of destination in Belize (Hillside to provide)
 - Register with the US Embassy (or your country of origin) in Belize here: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

In addition:

- Travel from International Airport directly to Hillside Clinic to minimize the possibility of exposure to COVID-19 prior to beginning the rotation at Hillside Clinic.
- Travel within the country after your rotation at Hillside Clinic is done at your discretion and risk.
- Route of travel from Belize International Airport to Punta Gorda - flying or travel by private vehicle is recommended for less contact with the public. (versus bus travel)
- No visitors will be allowed in the dorm.



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- Mask wearing (cloth or surgical grade) is mandatory in public at all times. (This is mandated by Belize's authorities.) Please follow the mandates for your safety.
- Be sure to pack a pocket size hand sanitizer, your masks, and eye protection (goggles or face shield - for use in the clinic).
- Please bring along your own supply of any preventative or symptomatic meds you might need for viral illness: tylenol/ibuprofen, antihistamine, vitamins, anti-diarrheal, anti-nausea

Working in the clinic:

- There will be daily temperature checks and assessment of symptoms.
- Must wear at least a surgical mask and eye protection (your choice of face shield or fully enclosed goggles). Please provide these for yourself. If your school requires an N95 mask, please follow their directions, and again provide your own. We will have a 1:10 bleach solution you can use to clean reusable items.
- Frequent handwashing or use of hand sanitizer is required.
- Be sure to communicate with the cleaning personnel/intake regarding rooms that need to be sanitized after patient use so we can take care of those needs adequately.
- If Hillside is notified that a patient has tested positive and staff/students are exposed:
 - The Medical Director will notify you and your school/instructor and follow their instruction
 - Rapid antigen swab will be arranged with local MOH clinic
 - Isolate for 14 days in an area to be designated
 - If you begin to have symptoms (fever, loss of taste/smell, diarrhea, cough, headache) please inform the Hillside Medical Director ASAP so we can provide supportive treatment and create a plan for isolation



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Evening/Weekend activities:

- Freedom to explore the community and beauty of Belize will likely be dependent on the number of COVID cases in the area at any given time. Belize has practiced curfews and/or shutting down communities where COVID is spreading rapidly. Freedom to explore will be very dependent on what the local government recommends.
- If COVID numbers are down, going out to eat at a local restaurant as a group should be safe as long as masks are worn and physical distancing guidelines are followed.
- Public transportation should be avoided as much as possible. Use a taxi that Hillside can recommend as clean and reliable. This service can be arranged for longer weekend excursions if Hillside feels like it is safe to go to a community off site.



In the Dorm:

- Each person will have their own room to provide sufficient space for “physical distancing”
- Bathroom/shower areas have been equipped with barriers where there is not space to stay 6 feet apart (ie: sink areas), where it is not possible to maintain the 6 ft. distance, please alternate use of the areas.
- Cleaning of the common used areas will be done by the Housekeepers once daily on workdays
- It is expected that masks will be worn outside of your room.



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Shared kitchen, dining room, laundry rooms, bathrooms:

- Students are advised to create a schedule to do laundry and stagger activities/ use of the various facilities so that everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart from one another.
- People who are sick, their roommates, and those who have higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should eat or be fed in their room, if possible.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils. Non-disposable food service items used should be handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and water.
- Guidelines for laundry such as washing instructions and handling of dirty laundry is posted (will be posted) by the washer.
- Sinks could be an infection source and should avoid placing toothbrushes directly on counter surfaces. Totes can be used for personal items so they do not touch the bathroom countertop.

Laundry for clothing, towels, linens and other items:

- Launder items using the washer in Abby's house and hang on line to dry or you can choose to pay a small fee to dry items using Hillside dryer in Housekeeping.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers
- Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.

Shopping for groceries:

- Please do your grocery shopping on the days the clinic is closed (Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday) Guidance will be given for this in orientation after arrival at Hillside.





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Reminders:

Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- It's especially important to wash:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - Before touching your face
 - After using the restroom
 - After leaving a public place
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After handling your mask
 - After changing a diaper
 - After caring for someone sick
 - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- Inside your home: Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
 - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- Outside your home: Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
 - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
 - Stay at least 6ft (about 2 arm's length) from other people.
 - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at a higher risk of getting sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.



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- Everyone should wear a mask in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
 - Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- **Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.**

Cover coughs and sneezes

- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- 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 readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Clean and disinfect

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant.

Monitor Your Health Daily

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 ft.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
 - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.