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COVID-19 STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

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PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDENT SUPPORT PLAN

The Department of Student Affairs' Student Wellness Service (SWS) aims to provide support to students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The support includes

- providing care and support to UCT students with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 and those who test positive for COVID-19.
- conducting contact tracing and providing education and support to all close contacts of known cases to help limit the spread of infection in the UCT community and help prevent cluster outbreaks
- providing COVID-19 prevention education and support to UCT students infected with COVID-19 as well as the UCT community at large.

All students should abide by all Department of Health and UCT regulations, procedures, and protocols, and take all necessary steps to minimise the possible spread of the COVID-19 virus.

1.2 COVID-19 PREVENTION AND PRECAUTIONS

Please adhere to these critical preventative measures:

- In public and shared spaces, always wear a mask that covers your nose and mouth.
- Wash hands.
- Don't touch your face.
- Keep 1.5 metres apart.
- Cover your cough.

It's also important to avoid the three C's, as overlapping factors increase the risk of infection in these situations:

1. Crowded places and social gatherings.
2. Close contact settings.
3. Confined and enclosed spaces.

COVID-19 Vaccine

Vaccination is the best way of saving ourselves from illness, death and ongoing disruptions of our lives and work.

For further information and advice visit:

- SWS Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 website <http://www.dsa.uct.ac.za/sws/covid19-getting-vaccinated>
- [National Institute for Communicable Diseases \(NICD\) COVID-19 Portal](#)
- [South African Department of Health COVID-19 Online Resource and News Portal](#)

1.3 COVID-19 RISK FACTORS

Please review these factors very carefully before deciding on whether to accept or decline your place on campus or in residence.

Individuals with any of the following conditions are at greater medical risk of contracting COVID-19:

- Uncontrolled diabetes mellitus
- Hypertension
- On immunosuppressant therapy (e.g., chronic oral steroids)
- HIV-positive and on treatment, but with poor adherence and not virally suppressed
- Pregnant women (post-delivery for 6 weeks) and breastfeeding women
- Unstable or complicated cardiac disease
- Chronic lung disease (uncontrolled asthma, COPD, active TB, post-TB structural damage, chronic bronchitis)
- Chronic liver disease with impaired liver function
- Chronic renal disease with impaired renal function
- Cancer and receiving chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- Bone marrow or organ transplants
- Morbid obesity (body mass index greater than 35)
- Over 60 years old

If you have any queries regarding this information, please contact us via one of the following channels:

- Contact the SWS Triage Line on 021 650 5620 and speak to the Clinical Nurse Practitioner.
- Contact your usual SWS practitioner through the [online booking system](#)
- Email your query to sws@uct.ac.za.
- Email COVID-19 vaccination queries to vaccinate.students@uct.ac.za
- For mental health support and counselling, make a booking [online booking system](#) or [UCT Mobile app](#), or call the UCT Student Careline (0800 24 25 26).

Important:

Remember that all medical or psychological information discussed with clinicians and staff at SWS remains confidential, as is the case with all our consultations.

COVID-19 vaccines (initial doses and boosters) are safe and effective and may reduce the risk of severe disease in people with an underlying medical condition

1.4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON COVID-19 VULNERABILITY

Question	Answer
I have a chronic illness which is not included on the above list. Will I still be at higher risk than other people?	<p>Please consult your prescribing clinician/facility. Be sure to ask specifically in the context of returning to campus, clinical work, and living in a university residence.</p> <p>Should your prescribing physician not be available, please contact the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) to discuss whether your illness or medication causes immunosuppression.</p>

Question	Answer
What is “virally unsuppressed HIV”? I am on HIV medication. Will I be at risk?	<p>Generally, if you’re HIV positive but your most recent monitoring blood tests showed a CD4 count greater than 200 and you have an undetectable viral load, you are not regarded as high risk.</p> <p>Be sure to obtain advice from your prescribing clinician if you have recently developed any new symptoms or if you’ve not been taking your medication compliantly in recent months.</p>
What happens if I discover that I am pregnant when I am already in residence?	<p>If there is any chance that you could be pregnant, please take a pregnancy test before travelling to Cape Town or moving into residence.</p> <p>If you are already in residence when you find out you are pregnant, contact the clinician treating you or contact the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) for advice.</p>
How do I know if my heart condition is an “unstable or complicated cardiac disease”?	<p>Please consult your prescribing physician. Be sure to ask specifically in the context of returning to campus, clinical work, and living in a university residence.</p>
I have asthma. How do I know if it is poorly controlled or not?	<p>Your prescribing clinician will best advise you by looking at overall trends of your asthma management over time. They will also consider whether you have had asthma flare-ups over time and whether you were required to change your medication type or dosage.</p> <p>Should your prescribing physician not be available, please contact the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) to discuss whether your illness or medication causes immunosuppression.</p>
I am younger than 30 years old. Does this mean that I am not at risk at all?	<p>Most young people who contract the virus experience a mild form of COVID-19. However, you should also consider your health in relation to the comorbidities listed above. If you are concerned, please consult a clinician or email sws@uct.ac.za for advice.</p>

1.6 STAY UPDATED

For the latest information on COVID-19 prevention and precautions please visit the National Institute for Communicable Diseases and Department of Health’s COVID-19 portals:

- <https://www.nicd.ac.za/diseases-a-z-index/covid-19>
- <https://sacoronavirus.co.za>

Please also keep updated with information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, both in the news and at UCT.

PART 2: PROCEDURES BEFORE ARRIVING AT RESIDENCE

The section that follows details the process for returning to residence, which kicks off when SWS invites you to return.

2.1 SHOULD I RETURN TO RESIDENCE?

Before deciding on whether to accept the invitation, go through the [list of risk factors](#) to help you assess whether you are more vulnerable to contracting the virus.

In addition, please consider the following:

- If you are ill from an acute medical illness, seek medical attention and try to delay your return until you are healthy again. This applies to *all* conditions – even those not related to a respiratory tract infection.
- If you have just recovered from an acute illness, obtain medical advice on when you can travel. It may be better to inform your faculty and wait another few days before returning to campus.
- When in doubt about any health-related matter, seek health advice from a private medical practitioner or the SWS Triage nurse (021 650 5620) or [book online](#) **before** returning to campus. **Please do not** wait until you're on campus to obtain health advice.
- If you have not been able to practice social distancing, or if you've participated in voluntary community activities where there was risk of exposure, note that you will need to inform SWS of this on your return to residence.

2.2 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

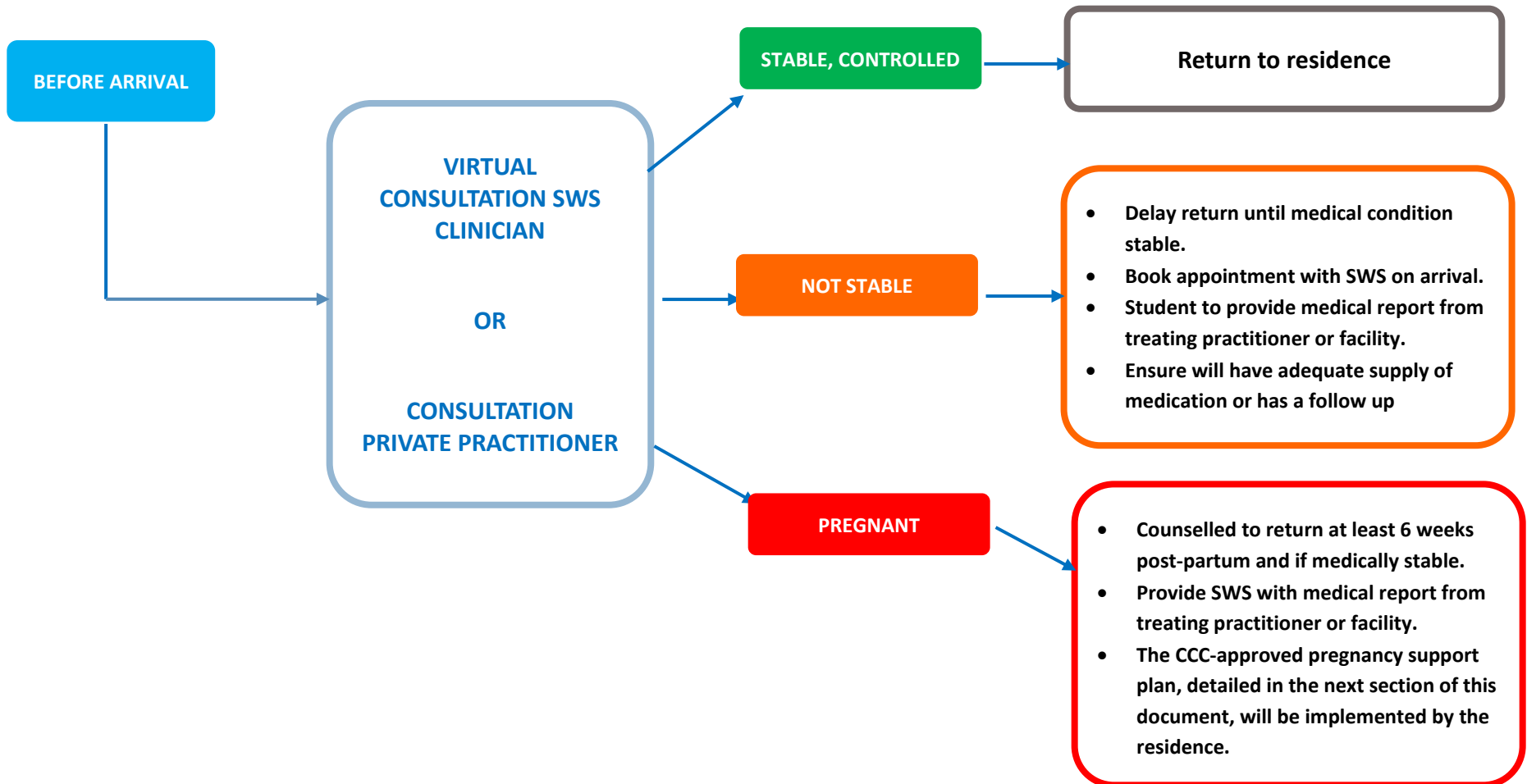
Students must follow the procedure described in [Part 3: Procedures at UCT residences](#)

2.3 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITH KNOWN MEDICAL CONDITIONS

SHRL invites the student to return to residence.

4. Students with a medical condition may consult with their own medical practitioner or contact SWS Triage Nurse 021 650 5620 for advice or [book online](#) for a consultation with a SWS Clinical Nurse Practitioner (CNP).
5. The student consults telephonically with the SWS CNP.
6. The CNP assesses if the student's medical condition is stable – i.e., if the student is on treatment and stable, and if the student has enough medication or a follow up appointment.

2.3.1 SUMMARY OF PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS



Arrives in residence - has a medical condition/pregnant

- **Book an appointment with SWS on arrival.**
 - **Counselled about the risks of COVID and being in residence.**
 - **If pregnant SH&RL organize alternative accommodation to reduce risk of acquiring COVID.**
-

Pregnant student currently in residence

- **Book an appointment with SWS.**
- **SH&RL will arrange alternative accommodation with the aim of reducing the risk of acquiring COVID.**
- **Student considers return to residence at least 6 weeks post-delivery (post-partum) and after student had made arrangements for the care of the baby if the student is not living in a designated student residence with family accommodation.**

2.3.2 PROCEDURES FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS GOING INTO RESIDENCE

We strongly recommend that pregnant students delay returning to the residence community until 6 weeks after delivery of the baby. Following this, students who wish to return to residence at least 6 weeks after delivery (post-partum) will be asked to provide a medical report from their health practitioner/health facility approving their return to a university residence, with a gynaecologist's letter of clearance, based on the post-delivery well-being of the student.

Students may access SWS counselling and psychological services through the online booking platform.

However, if pregnant students choose to return to residence anyway, prior to coming into residence, the student is counselled about the risks of severe disease during pregnancy and the increased risk of COVID-19 transmission in a residence, noting the limited primary care support SWS can offer to pregnant students in a residence.

Upon arrival at the residence:

1. The student must disclose their pregnancy to the SWS COVID response team.
2. The student will be screened as per the Student Support plan.
3. Residence staff will provide the student with temporary accommodation until alternative off-campus accommodation is identified.

2.3.3 SUPPORT FOR PREGNANT STUDENTS ALREADY IN RESIDENCE

Where a student is already in residence and discovers they are pregnant, they will be advised of this protocol and the implementation thereof.

1. As soon as pregnancy status is known, the student **MUST** declare their expected date of delivery (EDD) and a copy of their gynaecologist's records to the SWS Medical Officer. This will enable SWS to make appropriate referrals and to facilitate emergency assistance if necessary.
2. The Residence team will facilitate the student's move to private off-campus accommodation as soon as possible. This is done to reduce the risk to the pregnant student and baby, while also providing a conducive environment for the mother and baby, and caregiver if applicable.
3. The student can consider a return to residence at least 6 weeks post-delivery (post-partum), provided that their gynaecologist sends a letter of clearance to the SWS Medical Officer.
4. If the student is not in a residence with family accommodation, the student must make personal arrangements for the care of the baby.

PART 3: PROCEDURES AT UCT RESIDENCES

3.1 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE AT RESIDENCE?

There is no longer the 7-day self-quarantine upon arrival back in residence.

Students must also refer to the latest guidelines in **STUDENT HOUSING & RESIDENCE LIFE - COVID 19 PROTOCOLS**

The University needs to ensure that students and staff are as safe as possible from the COVID-19 virus, for this reason only the self-quarantine process has changed; however, the safe arrival process back into residence will still apply and all related residence COVID-19 protocols currently in place remain.

The safe arrival process requires that:

- On return to residences and every time a student needs to access UCT's campuses, they should complete [The UCT Daily Health Screening app](#). The screening is done via the UCT Mobile app; for more information on the app, incl. installation, login and support, see [UCT Mobile](#).
- Students with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) must contact the SWS COVID-19 response team 021 650 1271. See [3.4 What if I screen positive for COVID-19?](#)
- Encouraging you to practice social distancing and staying in your room during the 7 days as much as possible.
- Limiting your movements to only essential errands for example attending your academic activities and meals.

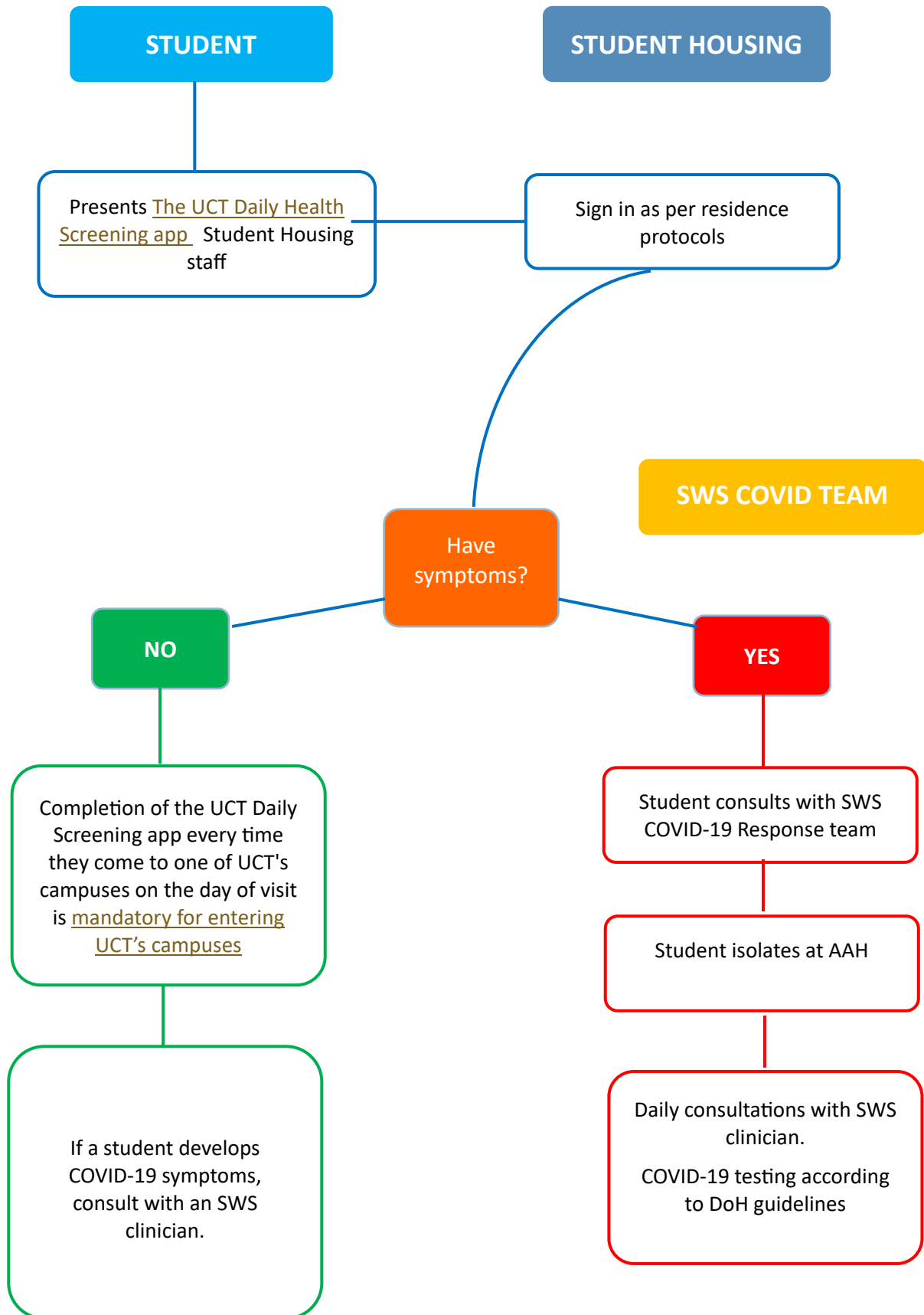
3.2 COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

You are considered to have COVID-19 symptoms if you have **ANY** of the following:

- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- anosmia (partial or complete loss of the sense of smell)
- dysgeusia (distortion of the sense of taste)

Along with these symptoms, you may or may not experience other symptoms – such as headache, rhinorrhoea, fever, weakness, myalgia (muscle aches and pain), or diarrhoea.

3.3 PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS ARRIVING AT RESIDENCE (SUMMARY)



3.4 WHAT IF I SCREEN POSITIVE FOR COVID-19?

Students will be managed by SWS clinical staff as per the SWS protocol for managing COVID-19 symptoms.

Students in a residence will be transferred to the UCT isolation facility at All Africa House for the duration of their isolation period. Students in private accommodation will self-isolate at home/in their private accommodation.

Category	Description	Actions
Asymptomatic Individuals	This includes individual who are asymptomatic and test positive for COVID-19. This category includes individuals who test for travel purposes.	<p>No isolation period required</p> <p>Students must consult with a SWS clinician to exclude COVID-19 symptoms.</p> <p>To do self-observation for 7 days for development of any symptoms with enhanced precautions including wearing a medical/surgical mask, social distancing and avoiding attending settings where many people gather:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - dining hall - lecture theatre/classes - group sporting events - any situation where there is no mask wearing and physical distancing is not possible <p>Complete The UCT Daily Health Screening app for the period of 7 days.</p> <p>Students with COVID-19 symptoms must contact the SWS 021 650 1271.</p>
Mild disease	<p>Refers to individuals who have symptoms and have tested positive but who do not require hospitalization.</p> <p>Do not have shortness of breath, dyspnoea and have a normal mental state.</p>	<p>Students will be referred for testing as per the current DoH guidelines.</p> <p>Students in residences will be transferred to the UCT isolation facility for a period of isolation as guided by the current Department of Health guidelines. 3.5 What to expect at the UCT isolation facility (AAH)</p> <p>Students must wear a medical/surgical mask at all times in all public spaces for the duration of the isolation.</p> <p>Students in the health sciences following return to campus must wear a N95 mask at all times and must at all times avoid contact with extremely high-risk patients (especially severely immune-compromised patients).</p>

Category	Description	Actions
Severe COVID-19 symptoms	This includes students with severe symptoms – such as shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, altered mental state or reduced level of consciousness.	<p>Students will be assessed by a SWS clinician and referred to hospital for further care and treatment.</p> <p>Students will be in isolation for a period of 10 days from the date their severe COVID-19 symptoms resolve.</p>

3.5 WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE UCT ISOLATION FACILITY (AAH)

Question	Answer
How do I get to the isolation facility?	We will provide transport to and from the facility.
What's in my room?	<p>You are provided with a secure and quiet room which is conducive to studying. You won't share bathroom or kitchen facilities.</p> <p>Clean bed linen and towels are provided during your stay.</p> <p>A telephone is provided for calling the 24-hour SWS COVID-19 line (021 650 1271) for reporting medical issues. For general housekeeping issues students should call the isolation facility reception line 021 650 5412.</p>
What about food?	We provide you with meals for the duration of the isolation period.
Do I have to stay indoors at all times?	You may leave your room to use the outside quad area with prior arrangement with the nursing staff. Please maintain a physical distance of more than 2 metres from others and wear a surgical/medical mask when outside your room.
Is there a cleaning service?	No. You must clean your own room during your stay. We will provide you with the cleaning materials.
Any other rules I should know about?	No visitors will be allowed. Alcohol and drugs are also prohibited. Students are to adhere to (and only where applicable, aligned and additionally permissible via this protocol document) all provisions of residence rules related to handbook 3.
Will I have medical appointments?	The nursing staff will conduct daily telephone consultations with you and will provide medication to manage the mild symptoms.
Should I inform those I've had close contact with about my symptoms / diagnosis?	<p>Yes. And if you test positive for COVID-19, the isolation facility staff will get in touch with your close contacts to advise them. They will be asked to monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and report any new symptoms to the SWS COVID-19 Response team.</p> <p>Close contacts of COVID-19 cases who develop symptoms will be managed according to the procedures described above.</p>

Question	Answer
What do I bring when admitted to the isolation facility?	Please bring your toiletries, clothes for the duration of the isolation period (no laundry services), study material and any other items that will make your stay comfortable.

3.6 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: INFECTED WITH COVID-19 / CONTACT WITH INFECTED PERSON

FAQ	Suggestions
What is the definition of 'close contact'?	'Close contact' occurs when you've had face-to-face contact (closer than 1 metre) or have been in a closed space with a confirmed COVID-19 positive person for at least 15 minutes. This contact must have occurred while the positive person was still infectious – i.e., from two days before their symptoms started until 10 days after their symptoms began.
What should I do if I was in close contact or exposed to someone who may have COVID-19?	<p>Please contact SWS 021 650 1271 for further advice.</p> <p>You must screen yourself daily for COVID-19 symptoms using The UCT Daily Health Screening app</p> <p>If you develop symptoms, isolate in your room and contact SWS 021 650 1271.</p> <p>If you do not have symptoms, you don't need to quarantine – but always wear a mask when you're around others.</p> <p>Very importantly, if as a close contact you test positive, please contact SWS 021 650 1271 for further advice.</p>
What should I do if I was in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19?	<p>Please contact SWS 021 650 1271 for further advice.</p> <p>You must screen yourself daily for COVID-19 symptoms using The UCT Daily Health Screening app</p> <p>If you develop symptoms, isolate in your room and contact SWS 021 650 1271.</p> <p>If you do not have symptoms, you don't need to quarantine – but always wear a mask when you're around others.</p> <p>People who were in contact with you do not need to go into quarantine.</p>
What happens if I'm diagnosed with COVID-19?	<p>You are managed according to our standard procedures for dealing with positive cases.</p> <p>If you were in close contact with others in the two days before you were tested, or two days before your symptoms began, those individuals are at risk. The SWS COVID-19 team will contact them and advise them on symptoms screening and COVID-19 precautions.</p>
What if multiple students are diagnosed with COVID-19?	The SWS COVID-19 Response team will conduct close contacts tracing to identify students who may be at risk and provide education and support.

FAQ	Suggestions
	<p>If any UCT students or staff were in close contact with infected students, they are at risk.</p> <p>Close contacts tracing helps to limit the spread of infection in the UCT community and helps in preventing cluster outbreaks.</p>

3.7 COVID-19 SCREENING AND TESTING

3.7.1 ONLINE AND TELEPHONIC SCREENING

SWS offers COVID-19 screening online via the [online booking system](#) or telephonically by contacting SWS Triage line (021 650 5620 during office hours) or SWS COVID-19 line (021 650 1271 at any time). No walk-in screening services are provided on UCT campuses.

3.7.2 UCT RESIDENCE-BASED SCREENING SITES

On arrival to residences, during the first 7 days in residences and before going to campus, students must screen themselves for COVID-19 symptoms using [The UCT Daily Health Screening app](#). This will be checked before entering campus.

Students with COVID-19 symptoms should call the SWS Triage line (021 650 5620 during office hours) or the DSA Students COVID-19 Hotline (021 650 1271 at any time). Students can also book a virtual appointment using the [online booking system](#). The SWS COVID-19 Response team monitors the app daily and will follow up on students with COVID-19 symptoms.

Students who are screened positive for COVID-19 will be managed according to the latest NICD/DoH COVID-19 guidelines. Note that SWS does not conduct testing for COVID-19. Students will therefore be referred to a private laboratory or to a government testing site.

3.7.3 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TESTING SITES

Testing is available at Groote Schuur Hospital (phone 021 404 2003/4 or 021 404 2006/7). Ask the SWS staff for the hospital testing hours. Alternatively, refer to the [City of Cape Town public testing sites](#) listed below.

However, please do not go for testing without being referred and taking the necessary completed documentation. This will be completed by your healthcare professional (doctor or nurse). SWS clinicians will then refer you to the appropriate testing site, based on your place of residence, if you meet the National Department of Health COVID-19 criteria.

Please contact the facility before you go for testing, or call the following numbers for advice:

Facility	Number
NICD Hotline	0800 029 0999 / 0800 011 1132 or WhatsApp "Hi" to 060 102 3456
Western Cape Provincial hotline	021 928 4102
Student Wellness Triage line	021 650 5620 (office hours)
SWS COVID-19 line	021 650 1271 (after hours, weekends and holidays)

3.6.4 PRIVATE TESTING SITES

Several organisations conduct private testing. However, note that the cost of testing will be for your own account, or that of your medical aid where applicable. Please ensure that you are fully aware of the cost implications before testing at such an organisation.

- **Pathcare:** <https://www.pathcare.co.za/drs-portal/covid-19-patient-information>
- **Lancet laboratories:** <http://www.lancet.co.za/corona-virus-info-hub>
- **Ampath:** <https://www.ampath.co.za/covid-19-collection-sites>

3.6.5 PUBLIC TESTING SITES

Please contact your local clinic for more information on testing:

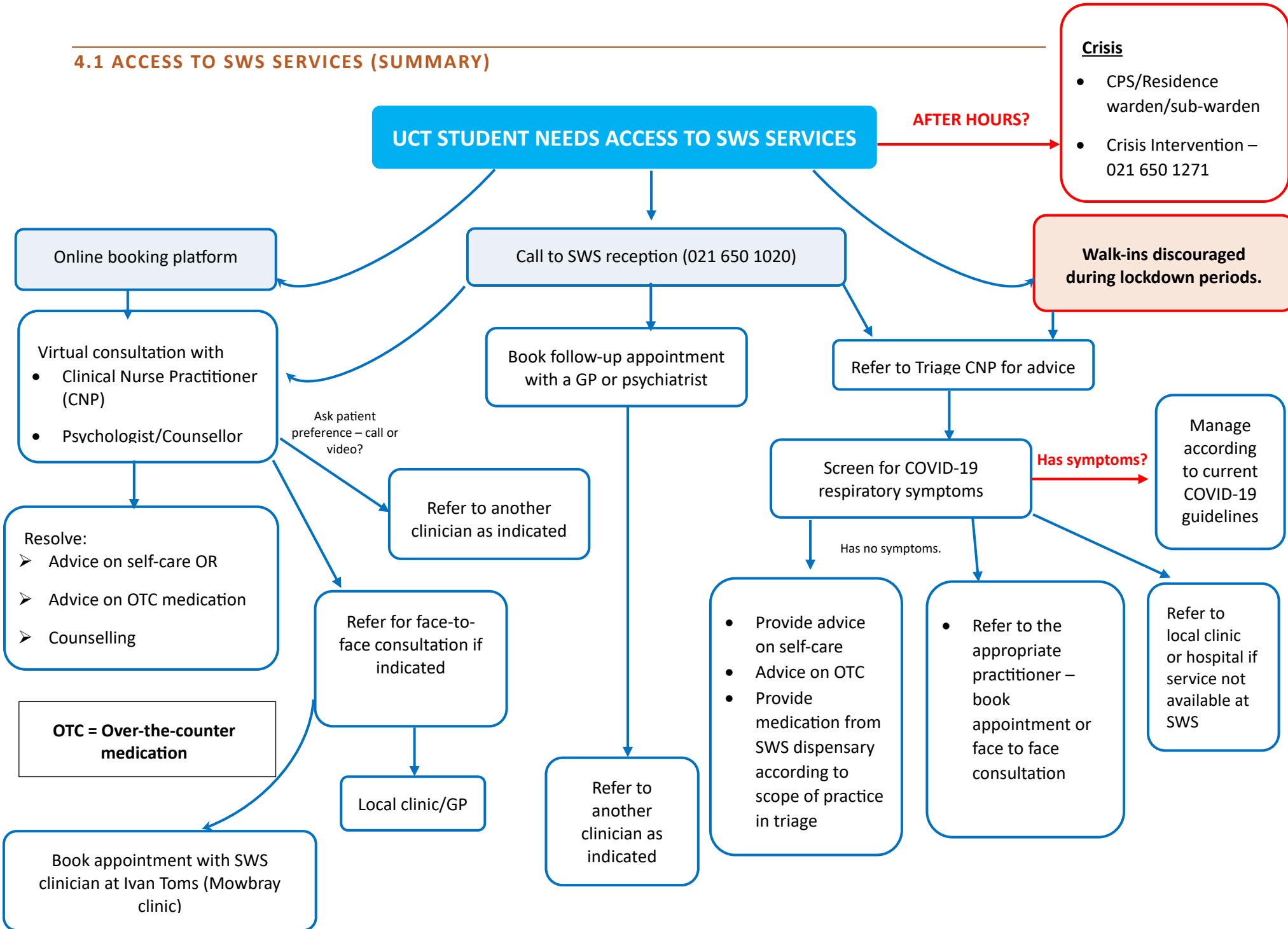
- [City of Cape Town facilities](#)
- [Western Cape Department of Health facilities](#)

PART 4: GETTING HELP: ACCESS TO SWS SERVICES

SWS is offering virtual consultations during COVID-19 pandemic. These are preferably telephonic or video consultations, but in cases where a face-to-face consultation is necessary, the procedure described in [section 4.2](#) will be followed.

All students will be screened for COVID-19 symptoms before consultations.

4.1 ACCESS TO SWS SERVICES (SUMMARY)



4.2 PROTOCOLS FOR THE SWS MAIN CLINIC

The SWS main clinic (Ivan Toms building at 28 Rhodes Avenue, Mowbray) is designated as a **high-risk area**. As such, this protocol aims to protect staff and students from unnecessary risk of exposure to the Coronavirus.

4.2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

UCT COVID app – daily Health Screening must be completed before access is allowed to SWS

- To access the clinic, please schedule an appointment or make an online booking in advance. Only students with booked appointments will be allowed onto the property. **Walk-ins are discouraged during lockdown periods.**

Students in the waiting area in reception will be limited to ensure they are spaced at least 1.5 m apart.

- All students must wear a mask that covers both the mouth and nose at all times. Students must also maintain physical distancing of at least 1.5 metres and follow prescribed hygiene measures at all times – such as proper coughing etiquette.
- If a student is sick on the day of their appointment, they need to inform SWS 021 650 5620 before the appointment time.

4.2.2 SCREENING PROCEDURE FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

1. Students, staff, and all visitors must complete [The UCT Daily Health Screening app](#) before coming to SWS. Students with COVID-19 symptoms must inform SWS of this **before** arriving at the building.
2. For students with physical disabilities, access to the clinic will be made as easy as possible without compromising the health of staff and students.
3. On arrival at Reception students with **booked appointments**, must show their UCT Daily Screening Health Screen app result to the reception staff.

4.2.3 APPOINTMENTS

- All appointment times must be strictly adhered to.
- Students at risk of severe disease (high risk) will be prioritised for face-to-face appointments.
- Students with respiratory or COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, runny nose, fever, chills, body aches, headaches) must book a COVID-19 consultation or contact the SWS Triage Line (021 650 5620 during office hours or the SWS COVID-19 help line 021 650 1271 at any time) to be advised.
- Students in reception will be seated two metres apart and will remain in the reception area until called by their clinician.
- Students who require access to the bathroom must use the designated student bathrooms and maintain a high hygiene standard. They must immediately wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds and then dry them with the paper towels provided.
- After their appointments, students will leave the SWS main clinic via the reception area without socialising with any other students. They will then leave the property immediately via the main gate.

4.2.3 PHARMACY SUPPORT

Pharmaceutical services are accessible to all UCT students who have a valid prescription from an SWS clinician.

The services offered include

- Preparation and dispensing of medicine prescribed.
- Information and advice on medicine; and
- Other health-related issues.

For collection of repeat medication (strictly for students who have an existing prescription at the Pharmacy), please use the [online booking system](#).

4.3 MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

SWS offers virtual counselling sessions and limited face to face sessions will start on 1 March 2022. Counselling is offered by registered psychologists (clinical and counselling); registered social workers and registered counsellors who form part of the full-time staff complement.

For all SWS virtual counselling bookings, refer to the section on [accessing SWS services](#).

The Student Wellness Service Peer Counselling programme has a team of four peer counsellors who are postgraduate students. The programme provides intervention through individual counselling, along with other activities such as public health awareness effort and groupwork interventions.

The dynamic peer counsellors support students through four focus areas:

1. [Counselling](#)
2. [Social / emotional adjustment](#)
3. [Health and wellness](#)
4. [Academic support](#)

4.3.1 COUNSELLING

The peer counsellors are all UCT postgraduate students who have already completed a basic degree. They have qualified as social workers or registered counsellors and are registered and strictly bound by their professional boards' confidentiality.

Prior to the nationwide lockdown, the peer counsellors were based at the SWS main clinic in Mowbray from which the programme offered a combination of face-to-face and digital counselling. During the lockdown, the peer counsellors offer telephonic and online counselling, which can be booked via the [SWS website](#) or [UCT Mobile app](#).

A session with a peer counsellor is scheduled for 40 minutes. The peer counsellor listens and gives feedback to the student to help them better cope with the issues they're facing.

Students can talk to the peer counsellor about anything they want. Common themes and topics are academic concerns, relationship or family issues, adjustment difficulties, how to cope with anxiety or depressive symptoms, substance abuse, and sexuality issues. The peer counsellor offers short-term psychosocial interventions (1-8 sessions) and, if necessary, will also refer students to the multidisciplinary team of health care practitioners at SWS for other psychosocial interventions.

4.3.2 SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

We understand that adjusting to UCT is challenging enough, even without the context of COVID-19. As a result, students may struggle to adjust to various aspects of the new normal. These include:

- Living and working at home
- Restricted movement
- Online or distance learning
- Lack of social support

The peer counsellors help students to adjust, addressing various issues, such as:

- Academic (including avenues to academic support)
- Social
- Mental and emotional well-being
- Institutional adjustment (to UCT)
- Social support (connecting to others)

4.3.3 HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In collaboration with SWS's nurses and doctors, peer counsellors take a bio-psychosocial approach: they employ education and awareness to promote overall physical health and wellness for students.

The peer counsellors aim to provide a holistic service which includes a focus on physical health and well-being, along with a focus on disease prevention.

Peer counsellors encourage students to have balance between physical health, mental health, and academic demands. They also promote reproductive and sexual health, along with elements of gender-based violence awareness.

This is done through counsellors' consultations with students as well as talks, groups, and presentations at student events and in student spaces.

Visit the [UCT Peer Counsellors' Instagram page](#) for more information and to learn about upcoming seminars.

4.3.4 ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Peer Counsellors provide assist students with goal management, study skills, overall wellness, and self-care. They can also assist students with ADHD, ADD, and other challenges.