



## COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Effective 1 June 2022  
V220530

These protocols complement our regular emergency protocols, available on our website. These protocols apply to anyone participating in one of MVI's international programs starting on or after June 1, 2022. Please write to [mvi2@mvinstitute.org](mailto:mvi2@mvinstitute.org) with questions about COVID-19 or general emergency protocols. These protocols are based on Costa Rica Ministry of Health guidelines, USA Centers for Disease Control recommendations, available resources in Costa Rica, and MVI experience during the pandemic.

### PREVENTIVE MEASURES

**The Monteverde Institute requires all international program participants, staff, and homestay families to be up-to-date on vaccination against COVID-19.** The "up-to-date" definition for international participants is that of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) of the USA; for MVI staff and homestay families, that of the Costa Rican Ministry of Health. The final vaccine dose will be administered at least two weeks prior to program start date.

**The Monteverde Institute requires masking in shared indoor spaces on our campus and during MVI-programmed activities,** following CDC guidelines. Masking can additionally be required in outdoor spaces with high-risk populations or according to our partner's guidelines (e.g., daycare/eldercare facility). Private entities can, by law, require masking in Costa Rica. Masking is required of anyone in the MVI kitchen. MVI strongly recommends masking in indoor, and crowded public, outdoor spaces everywhere (including airports and airplanes). Masking with a surgical mask is legally required in healthcare facilities in Costa Rica.

**Exceptions** to masking requirement: In classes, presentations, and other group activities in indoor spaces on the MVI campus or in MVI-programmed activities, the person speaking, presenting, or performing, may remove their mask while doing so, while maintaining at least a 1.8-meter distance from their audience. Groups not in homestay are not required to mask when only the group is together. A student in homestay is part of the family and does not have to mask at home (they will mask when with their classmates).

**Handwashing** is required upon entry to the MVI campus and many other establishments. MVI maintains **enhanced cleaning and disinfection** and **maximized natural ventilation** of indoor spaces on our campus.

### TESTING

See **Appendix I. The Monteverde Institute requires that every program participant bring at least one (1) home test per five (5) days of the program (round up), at least two (2) additional home tests if the program includes homestay, and more if dictated by MVI or the university for their particular program.**

Home tests are not widely available in Costa Rica, and more expensive than in the US. **Private laboratories** offer antigen and PCR testing, ranging from \$40 to \$240 (depending on type of test, laboratory location, and speed of results). **Public clinics** only test when dictated by current Ministry of Health guidelines.

**Testing is paid for by the participant** (or sending institution). Unless included (by request only) in the program/course budget ahead of time, MVI does not pay the cost of COVID-19 testing for participants. This includes homestay screening testing, testing with symptoms after exposure, and US re-entry testing.

When applicable, participants will bring a **letter from a medical doctor** verifying they had COVID-19 and recovered in the 90 days prior to the MVI program end date (this will serve to waive US re-entry testing requirement and MVI screening testing requirements during the program.) If a participant contracts COVID-19 in Costa Rica, they will receive **two email communications from the Ministry of Health**: one confirming the case and the isolation order, and one ending the isolation order and confirming recovery. The student will carry printed copies of both to travel back to the US, exempting them from the re-entry testing requirement.



### SCREENING TESTING

The **coordinator, driver, and any additional MVI program faculty or staff** will take an antigen test in the 24 hours prior to meeting the group. If anyone tests positive, a trained member of the MVI team or a contracted professional will take their place to begin the program on time. Every participant will take a home test **five (5) days after international travel**.

A negative COVID-19 test result is required in the 24 hours before entry into **homestay** at the beginning of the program, and re-entry into homestay after group field trips. This will happen with guidance and supervision from the MVI course coordinator and professor or program director.

Currently, **US entry requirements** include a negative COVID-19 test result, or COVID-19 recovery letter, to board a US-bound flight no more than one calendar day before the flight. Unless requested, the cost of departure testing is not included in the MVI budget, and is paid directly by the individual. MVI will facilitate the process of departure testing at a laboratory or with a technician visiting the hotel. If someone tests positive, they must follow all Ministry of Health guidelines, and their travel to the US will be delayed.

### DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Program participants, faculty, and MVI staff and contracted personnel must perform a **self-check** for COVID-19 symptoms every morning. If a participant presents **symptoms** of COVID-19, they will isolate, notify the MVI coordinator and course professor, and take a COVID-19 home test. If the result is **positive**, the person will go to the local clinic and follow all Ministry of Health mandates. MVI will facilitate clinic visits for international program participants. If the test result is **negative**, the person should continue to isolate, and re-test in 24-48 hours. If this second result is positive, the person will go to the clinic; if it is negative, they can return to normal activities.

If a participant or MVI coordinator is **exposed**, they will test on day 5 (exposure is day 0).

### SYMPTOMS

See **Appendix II**. Participants, faculty, MVI coordinator, and driver must conduct a **daily COVID-19 self-check** every morning. **If a participant presents any COVID-19 symptom, they will tell their MVI coordinator and course faculty.** If the score is **two (2) or more** on the daily COVID-19 self-check, they must **isolate** until the course of action is determined by the MVI emergency response team, in consultation with the local public clinic.

### EXPOSURE

See **Appendix I**. If a participant has close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, they will **monitor for symptoms and test on day 5** (exposure is day 0), unless symptoms develop earlier. **Close contact** is defined as being in close proximity (less than 1.8 meters) to an active, confirmed case for  $\geq 15$  minutes over a 24-hour period.

If the test is **positive**, the person will isolate for five (5) days, based on CDC guidelines. If the test is **negative**, no further action must be taken, except to monitor for symptoms and mask in public spaces as required by MVI protocols. If symptoms develop, the person will notify the MVI coordinator (see Symptoms).

### CONFIRMED CASE / ISOLATION

**Isolation orders** are mandated by the **Ministry of Health**. MVI will provide logistical support, within our ability and capacity, during isolation and to minimize transmission. In the case of asymptomatic cases detected in screening testing, the person will isolate for five (5) days (based on CDC guidelines), whether mandated by the Ministry of Health or not. **Isolation location** will be determined on a case-by-case basis, and will have a private bathroom with shower, good ventilation, bed, table, trash can, internet, and cleaning supplies or service. The professor and MVI academic staff will coordinate for twice-daily check-ins with the person in isolation.

Any additional cost associated with isolation is the individual's responsibility. MVI recommends **COVID-19 insurance coverage**. The MVI course coordinator will support in the collection of necessary documentation for insurance reimbursement when relevant.



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## HOMESTAY

All homestay families and students will submit verification of their **up-to-date vaccination status** to MVI one month before the program (photo of vaccination card).

**Families** will self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for two weeks prior to homestay. If any family member presents symptoms in the two weeks leading up to, or during the homestay, they will go to the clinic and follow all Ministry of Health guidelines, and notify MVI. If anyone in the family tests positive or is exposed to a confirmed case, the family will notify MVI to be advised of the course of action.

**Students** will self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for two weeks prior to homestay, notify their professor if they present any symptoms, and the professor will notify MVI, where the course of action will be decided and informed back to the professor. Students will **test negative for COVID-19** in the 24 hours before entering homestay.

If during the homestay a student or family member presents COVID-19 **symptoms** or is **exposed** to a confirmed case, they will inform the course coordinator, and follow subsequent MVI guidelines and any Ministry of Health mandates.

Some homestay families have young children who do not yet qualify for the COVID-19 vaccine. The sending institution will stipulate whether or not these families should be considered for their program, and **students with COVID-19 risk factors** will not be placed with families with unvaccinated children.

If a host family member or student contracts COVID-19 during the homestay, Ministry of Health guidelines will be followed, and input from the MVI-contracted medical doctor will be considered. If necessary, MVI will provide logistical support for a student isolating while the group is in homestay. Isolation location will be determined on a case-by-case basis, by MVI in consultation with program faculty.

## ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

If a student or professor must isolate, MVI will support their continued **remote/virtual participation** in the program, to the extent possible. The isolation location will have internet access. MVI will make every effort to provide or facilitate academic leadership by a qualified substitute if the professor's participation in the course is interrupted.

## PROGRAM MODIFICATION / CANCELLATION

Any program modifications warranted by pandemic conditions will be decided collaboratively with **sending institution faculty and MVI academic staff**. Changes before or during the program due to the pandemic will strive to maintain the focus and quality of the program.

**Eight weeks before** the program we will review any necessary modifications to the itineraries based on government guidelines, university protocols, and service provider policies and operations.

Leading up to the program start date, if a program is **cancelled** by either party...

- **≥45 days prior:** Full refund of funds received.
- **30-45 days prior:** Full refund, less 10% administrative not to exceed \$3500, to cover course preparation, reservations, contractual commitments, and cancellations.
- **<30 days prior:** Refund of recoverable variable costs. MVI will work to find an equitable solution for all, working closely with providers to recover as many costs as possible, some of which may convert to credit for future course services.

In the event of a program cancellation **after arrival** in Costa Rica, we will support faculty in departure logistics, and adjust the course budget to cover associated costs where possible (e.g. applying unused funds to support departure costs).



### COMMUNICATION

**Prompt, direct, respectful, and continuous communication is critical for these protocols to function as intended.** Each person has the responsibility to communicate if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or are exposed, in order to take action and minimize the impact of a possible COVID-19 infection on that person and everyone they interact with.

If a participant tests positive for COVID-19, the professor or program director will handle communication with the **sending institution**, unless another arrangement has been defined prior to the program, or is requested. If the professor cannot inform the sending institution, MVI administration will inform the sending institution.

If a participant is in **isolation**, MVI will ensure the person is contacted at least twice per day (in coordination with the professor). MVI will also facilitate communication with the Ministry of Health when necessary (e.g. provide interpretation for check-up calls).

If a participant, professor, MVI staff person, or homestay family member **tests positive**, any **close contacts** will be notified by MVI administration (with respect for confidentiality) and given recommendations based on these protocols, and a **general announcement** made to all, with a reminder to take preventive measures.

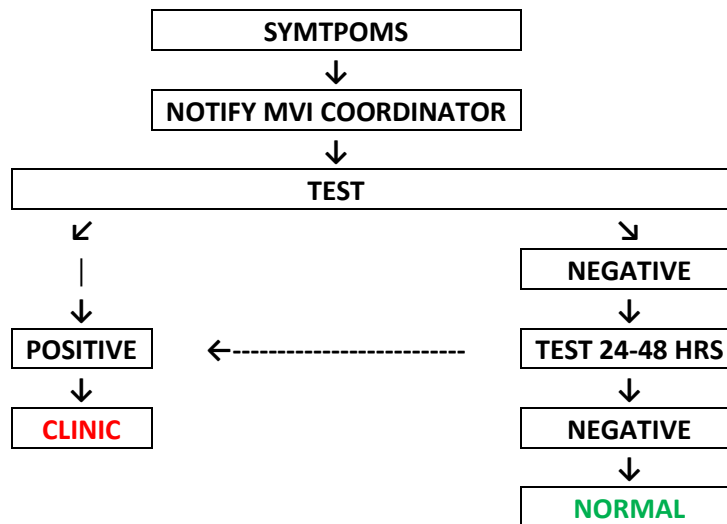
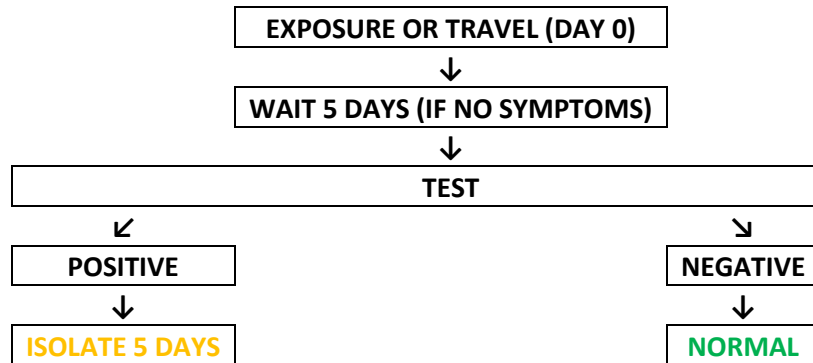
### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Unless requested by the sending institution, MVI does not include costs related to COVID-19 in the program budget. **All COVID-19-related additional costs are the responsibility of the individual, and will be paid directly.** These costs definitely include testing (home tests, departure testing), and could include clinic visits, doctor home visits, medicines, lab testing, isolation (lodging, meals, laundry, transportation), and those associated with arriving/departing after the group. MVI recommends **insurance coverage** that includes COVID-19 related expenses. When possible, MVI will offer low- or no-cost solutions; for example, adding a single room for isolation at a field station where the group is lodged might not generate an additional cost, and recoverable variable costs from missed activities could be applied to additional costs associated with isolation.



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## APPENDIX I: Guide for screening and diagnostic testing





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## APPENDIX II: Daily COVID-19 self-check

Have you had close contact with a confirmed case?	Report; test on day 5
Have you traveled?	Test on day 5
<b>Symptom</b>	<b>Score</b>
New cough	2
Difficulty breathing	2
Shortness of breath	2
Sudden loss of sense of smell	2
Sudden loss of sense of taste	2
Fever (temperature or touch)	1
Chills	1
Muscle pain	1
Sore throat	1
Nausea or vomiting	1
Fatigue	1
Nasal congestion	1
Altered mental state	1
Diarrhea or abdominal pain	1
General weakness	1
IF YOUR TOTAL SCORE IS 2 OR MORE: ISOLATE AND TELL YOUR MVI COORDINATOR (Based on Ministry of Health criteria for suspected cases)	



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## SOURCES CONSULTED

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/testing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/pdf/COVID-Testing-Flowchart\_V3\_Links.pdf

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/testing-international-air-travelers.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/self-testing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/testing-overview.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/testing/viral-testing-tool.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>

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<https://www.ministeriodesalud.go.cr/ministeriodesaludbk/index.php/centro-de-prensa/noticias/749-noticias-2022/2283-salud-recuerda-obligatoriedad-de-tercera-dosis-de-vacuna-covid-19-para-funcionarios-publicos>