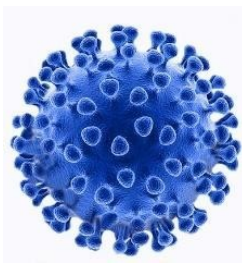


Staying Safe While Taking a Break



The use of face coverings and maintenance of physical distancing continue to be required at all times on Columbia University campuses. Face coverings may be removed only when in an office alone with the door closed, or when necessary for eating and drinking; personnel must also maintain physical distancing during break periods. This Fact Sheet is intended to provide guidance to all University personnel on safe practices for handling face coverings while eating and drinking, and where and how to safely maintain physical distancing

during break periods throughout the workday.

It is never safe, nor permitted, to eat or drink in a “wet” laboratory



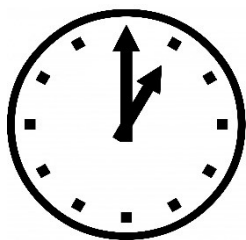
Federal OSHA regulations and New York City fire code prohibit the consumption of food or drink in any wet laboratory where hazardous materials are used and/or stored. This prohibition is also consistent with good laboratory and food hygiene practice and prevents cross-contamination with hazardous materials and contact with potentially infectious fomites.

Face coverings may be removed while eating and drinking

In accordance with the University's [Enhanced Health and Safety Policy](#), face coverings may be removed while eating and drinking. Masks must be stored in a bag when removed, and not be allowed to come into contact with shared surfaces.



Take breaks! But maintain physical distancing during break periods

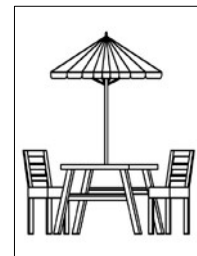


Break periods and personal interaction are important for physical and mental health and wellbeing. It is safe to take breaks with others, individually or in small groups, but personnel must locate to an area where they can maintain a distance of six feet at all times, and sharing of communal food should be avoided in order to further limit potential virus transmission. If joining others on a break, side-to-side distance is

important, but also avoid being directly across from someone else.

Where can University personnel go in order to take a break, safely?

Options for food and drink breaks include outdoor benches and seating areas – many locations are available at all campuses – conference rooms, and pantry areas, where available, and where physical distancing can be maintained. Clean common surfaces before and after use, remove your mask only when eating or drinking, and mask up when returning to the workplace.



Additional information available in the [COVID-19 Resource Guide for the Columbia Community](#)