

Forming your Graduate School “QuaranTeam”

While the safest way to avoid COVID is avoiding all contact with others, we recognize that this is not always practical or psychologically healthy. Forming a trusted group known as a pod, family group, bubble or quaranteam, is a way for grad students to feel less alone during these unusual times as safely as possible. **A “quaranteam” is a group of people you choose as your surrogate family for in-person socializing, while eliminating or minimizing in-person contact with others.** Here are some guidelines to keep you as safe as possible, physically *and* emotionally. None of these guidelines replace any of the rules you have agreed to in the [Yale Community Compact](#) (i.e. wearing an appropriate face covering in all shared community spaces, following protocols for group gatherings both indoors and outdoors, etc.).

Things to consider when forming your QuaranTeam:

- Choosing to be in a pod is not for everyone, so if you were approached about being in one you don't have to say yes. And if someone turns down your offer, don't press them.
- Keep your group small (no more than 8 people including everyone in your household). Every additional person adds risk.
- If you are at high risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19, or live with someone who is, you should avoid pods.
- The members of your group should all agree on the rules and expectations.
- Choose people you trust to be honest about their exposure and behaviors. Agree ahead of time what to do if someone isn't able to follow all the rules. For example, to self-quarantine for 10 days before returning to the pod if you spend a period of time with someone outside the pod, or possibly a negative COVID test depending on current local guidance.

Questions to ask when forming your QuaranTeam?

Do you have children?

You will probably want to limit your pod to one other family. It's important to balance the risks of additional contacts versus the benefits of socializing for children and parents.

Do you live with roommates (relative or non-relative)?

You should consider creating a pod with your roommate included. If you have a roommate, remember that anyone in your roommate's quaranteam is de facto in *your* quaranteam too! Try not to have two mutually exclusive pods, or if you must create separate pods, consider decreasing the number of people within each pod.

Do you live alone?

Pods are a great way to get in-person socialization! If you are comfortable with forming a pod, just make sure you keep your group small and are a part of only one pod. If you are not comfortable with forming a pod, there are many virtual ways to stay social and “close” to friends and family!

What are the rules of your team?

For example: Can you go to the gym? Group exercise classes? Are members going to in-person classes or the lab? What about visits to family for holidays and breaks? What types of extracurricular activities are ok? What about visitors/guests? Come up with rules that make sense for *your* group.

QuaranTeam in Action:

- All pod members who have access to testing, should make use of it regularly. Members of the Yale community have access to weekly asymptomatic testing and free options are available in the area.
- All members should get their flu shots (Yale community members are required to have a flu shot to return to campus).
- Your group should have a plan in place for quarantine and testing if a member gets COVID. Set this up *before* it happens. (See “Quaranteam contingency planning” for more info)
- Keep adjusting pod rules together if needed and make sure you openly communicate with each other. Every single member of the group has to agree to any proposed changes.
- Members should commit to remaining aware of university guidelines and messages.
- Try to spend time outside as much as possible. When indoors, open windows to ensure the best air circulation and don’t sit too close to each other.

QuaranTeam Contingency Planning:

- If someone does have symptoms, the group should stop getting together immediately. Any person with symptoms should isolate immediately, get tested and follow the advice of their healthcare provider. Everyone else should self-quarantine for 10 days or wait for two negative test results (First test is Day 1, second is no earlier than Day 5). Yale community members should notify and follow the guidelines from your Health and Safety Leader.
- If someone in the group thinks they may have been exposed or found themselves in a situation that didn’t feel safe, they should self-quarantine until they have two negative test results, as mentioned above.

*This information is brought to you by the Graduate Student Assembly and
McDougal Graduate Student Life.*

Suggested Reading

<https://ehs.yale.edu/safe-campus-practices>

[How to Form a Pandemic Pod](#)

[How to Keep COVID-19 From Invading Your “Pod” – and How to Stay Safe if It
Does](#)

[How To Create a COVID Bubble and Why You Should Consider One](#)

[How To Avoid Bursting Your Social ‘Bubble’ During The Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[I Traced my Covid-19 Bubble and It’s Enormous](#)