

# Getting Tested for COVID-19



**Celtic Pipkin**

The spring 2020 semester was abruptly interrupted by a deadly new virus. In late March, professors were forced to move classes entirely online. A new pass-fail grading option was implemented for that semester. Missouri S&T had to delay its in-person graduation ceremonies for spring and summer graduates until the end of the year. About 50 percent of the Fall 2020 classes were fully in person, while about 20 percent were blended (partly online and partly in person) and about 30 percent were fully online. In so many ways, COVID-19 affected the lives of each student, staff member, and faculty member of this university.

A senior majoring in technical communication, Celtic Pipkin, said that when S&T's St. Pat's celebrations were cancelled in spring 2020, the gravity of the situation began to set in for him. Like other students and faculty at Missouri S&T,

Pipkin learned to adapt to the changes placed on the university as a result of COVID-19. The school did not require students to be tested before returning for the fall semester, but they were expected to quarantine in Rolla for up to 14 days, depending on whether they were arriving from an international destination or a U.S. location. When he was interviewed in early September, Pipkin said, "My roommates and I live in a house on campus in Rolla where we've been quarantined, and our classes are all online, so we don't travel much."

Even though he had been in quarantine, Pipkin decided to get tested during the first week of school for the safety of others, including his own family. "Before I went home to celebrate my birthday, I figured I'd get tested to make sure I wasn't a threat to anyone," he said. Being tested for the virus was quite an experience. "I actually conducted the test myself." CVS in Rolla was his testing location. He went through the drive-thru where a bag was given to him through a slot at the window. Pipkin was directed to swab each nostril for 15 seconds. After putting the cotton swab in its container, Pipkin placed it into the original bag and handed it back to the person monitoring the test. This test was unlike any other he had taken.

Fortunately, Pipkin received negative results the following week, which allowed him to return safely home to celebrate with his family. Pipkin continued taking every precaution to ensure the safety of himself and those around him by wearing a mask and sanitizing his hands frequently. Although the circumstances were not ideal, Pipkin tried to remain optimistic about the school year and his new life during the pandemic.

