**Informed Consent for In-Person Research Activities**

**Study Title**:

**Principle Investigator**: Dr Leah Bent, lbent@uoguelph.ca

*COVID-19 and Face-to-Face Research*

This document contains important information about resuming in-person research in light of the COVID-19 public health crisis. COVID-19 refers to the virus being spread in communities across the globe. We are providing you with important information about COVID-19 and we ask that you consider the following information to determine if study participation is right for you at this time.

COVID-19 is a respiratory condition caused by SARS-CoV2, which can be spread by respiratory droplets, mainly from person-to-person. This can happen between people who are in close contact with one another (less than 2 metres). It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object (such as a doorknob or counter surface) that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. At this time, there is no vaccination to prevent COVID-19.

This study requires in-person visits and it is important to understand that this may increase your exposure to COVID-19. However, the University of Guelph and researchers have taken certain precautions to reduce the risk for you, the research staff, and their families (among others in the community) safe. The safety plans described below aim to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and are consistent with current Ontario Public Health and University of Guelph Environmental Health and Safety guidelines.

*Participant Screening*

All participants will be required to complete the University of Guelph screening process **24 hours prior to scheduled study visit and again the day of your appointment (prior to the study visit)**. The research team will confirm that the two screens are complete before proceeding with your visit. You will be asked about information regarding your health in the 14 days prior to the appointment, with special attention to the preceding 48 hours. Some of the questions you will be asked include:

1. Do you currently (and/or recently) have a cough, fever or any other symptoms of COVID-19?

2. Have you travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days?

3. Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19 or had close contact with anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19?

If you answer YES to any of these questions, it is important to stay home and self-isolate. Call Telehealth or contact your health care provider to find out if you need a test.

*Where will the study take place?*

Dr Leah Bent’s lab, located at the University of Guelph campus, Animal Science and Nutrition (ANNU) building, room 373

*What will happen the day of the study visit?*

1. On the day of testing, you will be asked to arrive at the university campus at your scheduled time.

2. Participants are encouraged to travel to campus in their own vehicles rather than public transportation, if possible. You are also encouraged to attend campus alone.

3. Please follow rules to ensure no parking infractions (i.e. do not park in tow away zone, accessible parking without permit, parking in unmarked spots).

4. All research participants are asked to wait outside until called to enter ANNU, room 373.

5. You are required to wear a mask prior to and following entry into the building or if distance cannot be maintained with other patrons outside**. If you do not have access to a mask, please let the research team know prior to your appointment and one will be given to you on the day of your visit.** Once your mask is on, you are asked to try not to touch your face or eyes with your hands.

6. You will be asked to wash or sanitize your hands upon entry into the building and lab space , as well as before exiting.

7. Participants will follow the research personnel to the designated study space and asked to follow their instructions once inside.

8. Participants are advised to use washroom facilities at home prior to coming to campus. However, washroom facilities are available on campus. These facilities have approved procedures for use that must be followed.

9. Once the study visit is complete, a member of the research team will lead you to the designated exit. You are asked to go directly to your mode of transportation without entering any other University buildings as you leave.

10. If you are unable or unwilling to follow these guidelines, please notify the researchers ahead of time.

*Safety Precautions*

In addition to participant screening before your in-person visit, you will find the following additional measures have been put in place to help reduce the risk of spreading or contracting COVID-19:

* The researchers will be wearing, masks, gloves, face shields and lab coats for the entire duration of the experimental procedure
* Researchers will wash hands before and after experimental procedure and use hand sanitizer prior to and after every physical contact point during the experiment
* Physical distancing will be practiced whenever possible and number of working personnel has been decreased to minimize personal interactions
* A physical barrier will be put in place once the participant is laying down on the testing bed and will remain in place for the duration of the experiment
* Consent and screening questionnaires will be administered via email or by telephone prior to the experimental session to minimize the time of contact
* The testing location has been relocated to a larger room to improve ventilation
* All equipment including the testing bed for the participant will be disinfected with a Lysol spray prior to and after each experimental session
* The lab space has been reorganized to allow for one-way traffic that is marked with floor decals. Indicators of 2 meters apart are also included to help establish appropriate physical distancing when possible.
* Two weeks following your testing session, you will be contacted by the researcher(s) and be asked to answer the participant COVID-19 screening questions listed above once again to confirm that you have not become symptomatic since your visit to campus.

*Risks & Confidentiality*

COVID-19 is a serious health threat, and the situation is evolving daily. The risk will vary between and within communities, but given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered high.

For most people, COVID-19 may only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults (aged 65 and older) and people with compromised immune systems or underlying medical conditions, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. Even in mild cases it is not known what the long-term health consequences may be.

There is a possibility that during your research activities you could come into contact with someone with COVID-19. If this were to occur, the University of Guelph is required by the Public Health Unit to collect and retain on file your email address or phone number to share with them for contact tracing purposes. **As such, anonymity as a research participant cannot be maintained. Should you choose to withdraw participation from this study, this personal information cannot be withdrawn from University of Guelph or Public Health records.** Please be assured that Public Health will not have access to any other data collected for this research study.

*Vulnerable Populations*

Certain individuals or groups are at greater risk of getting an infection and developing severe complications from COVID-19 and these populations must be supported and protected during this time.

Vulnerable individuals/groups may include, but are not limited to:

* Individuals over the age of 65 or children under the age of 16;
* Individuals with pre-existing medical conditions (e.g. immunocompromised, diabetes, lung disease);
* Individuals experiencing socio-economic challenges, such as inadequate or overcrowded housing;
* Indigenous communities who may suffer disproportionately due to systemic inequalities.

Face-to-face research involving vulnerable populations will require added considerations and measures for safety and, in some instances, participation in the research may not be advisable. Therefore, if you self-identify as vulnerable or are uncertain whether you fall within a vulnerable population, it is imperative that you inform the research team and ask for further guidance.

*Who can I contact if I have questions?*

If you have any questions, concerns or would like to speak to the study team for any reason, please contact Leah Bent at lbent@uoguelph.ca.

If you have questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB#18-06-016), please contact: Manager, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; (519) 824-4120 (ext. 56606).

*Consent*

I have read this Informed Consent for In-Person Research Activities and any questions about the study and/or COVID-19 have been answered. I freely consent to participate in this research.

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Participant Name

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date