

## Category: About COVID-19: Prevention, Symptoms, Testing

### 1. What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is caused by a new respiratory virus. In December 2019, the virus began circulating in humans.

It is important to take action because:

- There is no approved vaccine or medication to treat COVID-19 patients.
- Isolation and quarantine efforts seem to have reduced new COVID-19 transmission in other countries.
- Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death.

### 2. What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear in 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Common symptoms are:

1. Fever
2. Cough
3. Shortness of breath

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19, get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include\*:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

### 3. How do I monitor myself for symptoms?

Screen yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness such as cough, fever, and shortness of breath. If you develop symptoms and are concerned about your health, contact your healthcare provider. If you are under an isolation or quarantine order, you will need to report your symptoms to the local health department.

- If your local health department or healthcare provider has instructed you to *quarantine*, stay home and away from others to the extent possible.
- If the local health department has instructed you to *isolate*, you are **required** to stay home.
- Under the Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order, everyone is required to stay home except for essential needs.

#### **4. Are some people at greater risk for getting the virus?**

COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, **older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions** might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Based on what we know now, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are:

- [People aged 65 years and older](#)
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised
  - Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease

It is important to remember that stigma and discrimination occur when people associate an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality. COVID-19 does not target people from specific populations, ethnicities, or racial backgrounds.

#### **5. How does COVID-19 spread?**

Health experts are still learning about how this new coronavirus spreads. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person:

- Between people who are in close contact (within about six feet) of an ill person.
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

**What is considered a “close contact”?**

Here are some examples of close contact:

- Caring for, living with or visiting someone who has COVID-19.
- Being near someone who has COVID-19 in a confined space if that person is not wearing a mask.
- Being coughed or sneezed on by someone who has COVID-19.

Close contact is defined as:

- a. Being **within** approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a **prolonged period of time**.
  - or –
- b. Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).

We do not know exactly how long is necessary for close contact to occur, but it is thought to be between 10-30 minutes.

## **6. Can someone spread the virus without being sick?**

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest). Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

## **7. Does the coronavirus live on surfaces?**

More research is needed on how the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, however, similar viruses are known to be able to survive on surfaces. The length of time the virus may live on a surface depends on the type of surface (e.g., hard, porous). This is why it is important to wash your hands frequently and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces often.

## **Should I be concerned about getting COVID-19 from products or packages shipping from China or other parts of the world?**

In general, coronaviruses are unable to survive on surface for long periods of times – such as shipping packages. There is likely a very low risk of spread from products or packages shipping over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission associated with imported goods.

## **Does the virus live on currency notes (money) and coins?**

We know that the virus that causes COVID-19 can live on surfaces. The length of time the virus lives on a surface depends on the type of surface (e.g., hard, porous). It is not known how long, or even if, the virus lives on currency, but everyone should always practice good

hygiene when handling money. Money handlers should be sure to wash their hands frequently and avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

### **Should I disinfect my groceries?**

We know that the virus that causes COVID-19 can live on surfaces, but in general, viruses like the one that causes COVID-19 are unable to survive on surfaces for long periods of time. There is currently no evidence of people getting sick after coming in contact with grocery products. There is likely no harm in disinfecting non-perishable items according to safe handling instructions of household cleaners. The best thing you can do is to wash hands frequently, including after returning home from the store, after putting away groceries, and before cooking and eating.

### **8. How can I protect myself from getting COVID-19?**

There are steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold that will also help prevent COVID-19, including:

1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
3. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or upper sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
4. Avoid contact with people who are sick.
5. Stay home if you are sick and contact your healthcare provider.
6. Keep at least six feet away from one another to the maximum extent possible.
7. Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If you are traveling, follow the CDC's guidance at [CDC.gov/Travel](https://www.cdc.gov/travel).

### **9. Should I wear a mask to protect myself?**

Even healthy people are now encouraged to wear a cloth face covering when in public. There are lots of cost-effective ways to make a covering for your face. The [U.S. Surgeon General created a video](#) to show you how to make coverings with materials you have around your house.

It is important to remember that medical face masks (like surgical masks and N95 respirators) **must** be saved for healthcare workers. Medical facemasks should be worn by:

- [Healthcare workers](#)
- [People taking care of someone with COVID-19](#)

If you are sick with respiratory illness, your healthcare provider may recommend that you wear a mask. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.

#### **10. How should I clean my home to prevent the spread of COVID-19?**

[Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty. Then, use a household disinfectant.

Please remember to:

- Use EPA registered cleaners that you would normally use in these areas. Most EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A full list of disinfectants can be found [here](#).
- Read and follow product labels for safe use. More is not always better!
- Keep all cleaning products locked away from children.

Never mix bleach (chlorine) products with other chemicals. This can create toxic fumes.

**In the event of a poison emergency**, contact the Michigan Poison Center at 800-222-1222. If someone is unconscious or has trouble breathing, call 911 immediately.

#### **Should I clean and disinfect my groceries?**

We know that the virus that causes COVID-19 can live on surfaces, but in general, viruses like the one that causes COVID-19 are unable to survive on surfaces for long periods of time. There is currently no evidence of people getting sick after coming in contact with grocery products. There is likely no harm in disinfecting non-perishable items according to safe handling instructions of household cleaners. The best thing you can do is to wash hands frequently, including after returning home from the store, after putting away groceries, and before cooking and eating.

#### **11. Should I be concerned about my pets or other animals and COVID-19?**

To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. There is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands with soap after being around animals.

## **12. I think I was exposed, what do I do?**

If you think you have been exposed to someone who is sick with COVID-19, you should stay home and away from other people. If you develop symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath), and are concerned about your health, contact your healthcare provider to discuss your symptoms.

If your local health department contacts you, you should **follow their directions carefully**.

*Information for more specific experiences can be found below based on the person you may have interacted with and if you were in close contact with that person.*

### **A) I have been around someone who is sick. Do I need to self-quarantine?**

If you have been around someone who is sick with respiratory illness (cough, fever, shortness of breath) you should try to self-quarantine to the best of your ability (try to stay home and away from others). You should continue frequently washing your hands, covering your coughs and sneezes, and cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces.

### **B) I've been around someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Do I need to self-quarantine?**

- ***If you were not considered a close contact:***

In general, it is encouraged that people stay home right now, as much as possible. Of course, if you develop symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath), and are concerned about your health, contact your healthcare provider to discuss your symptoms.

- ***If you are a close contact:***

You should self-quarantine away from others for 14 days since the last day you had contact with that person. It is possible that your local health department will call you to discuss your risk, you can also reach out to your local health department. If you develop symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath), and are concerned about your health, please call your healthcare provider.

Close contact is defined as:

- a. Being **within** approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a **prolonged period of time**.
  - or -

- b. Having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on).
- If you are a healthcare worker, follow your facility's guidance.

**C) Someone I was in close contact with was in contact with someone who tested positive (3<sup>rd</sup> party exposure).** *For example, a close friend of my spouse has been diagnosed, and they recently spent time together.*

You should monitor yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness (cough, fever, shortness of breath) and remember to practice good social distance, but quarantine is not required. If you develop any symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), you should self-isolate at home and contact a healthcare provider if you are concerned about your health.

**D) Someone in my household was exposed (as a close contact) to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?**

Have that person in the household self-quarantine for 14 days while monitoring for symptoms. Follow appropriate precautions for cleaning, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette. If you receive any instructions from that person's employer or the local health department, follow them carefully.

You should monitor yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness (cough, fever, shortness of breath) and remember to practice good social distancing. If you develop any symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), you should self-isolate at home and contact a healthcare provider if you are concerned about your health.

### **13. A co-worker tested positive for COVID-19, should I be concerned?**

**If you have been in close contact with your co-worker:** You should self-quarantine away from others for 14 days since the last day you had contact with that person. Your employer might contact you with further instructions. It is possible that your local health department will call you to discuss your risk, you can also reach out to your local health department. If you develop symptoms of respiratory illness (fever, cough, shortness of breath), and are concerned about your health, please call your healthcare provider.

**If you have not been in close contact with your co-worker:** You should monitor yourself for symptoms of respiratory illness (cough, fever, shortness of breath) and remember to practice good social distance, but quarantine is not required. It is possible that your employer will contact you. You should follow any instructions from your employer

carefully. If you develop any symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), you should self-isolate at home and contact a healthcare provider if you are concerned about your health. Remember to follow appropriate precautions for cleaning your work area, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.

#### **14. Who determines if someone is tested for COVID-19?**

In Michigan, clinicians (e.g., doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants) determine who is tested for COVID-19. They use [prioritization criteria from MDHHS](#) to help make their decisions. High priority specimens (people at the most risk of becoming very sick or spreading the illness to others, or healthcare workers) are usually tested at the state lab, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Bureau of Laboratories. Specimens might be tested at a commercial or hospital lab as well.

Not everyone needs to be tested for COVID-19. Here is some information that might help in making decisions about seeking care or testing.

- Most people have mild illness and are able to recover at home.
- There is no treatment specifically approved for this virus.
- Testing results may be helpful to inform decision-making about who you come in contact with.

#### **15. What do I do if I think I need to be tested for COVID-19?**

If you are experiencing respiratory illness or other severe or concerning symptoms and you are concerned about your health, call your healthcare provider to discuss your symptoms.

Your healthcare provider might ask you to come in for an appointment or set up a virtual appointment. They will decide if you need to be tested based on signs and symptoms of respiratory illness and your potential exposure. They also try to rule out other causes for respiratory illness.

- If your healthcare provider decides it is necessary to test for COVID-19, they will take the sample and order testing. You will receive your results from your healthcare provider.
- If your healthcare provider decides it is not necessary to test for COVID-19, and you do not agree, you could consider getting a second opinion.
- If your healthcare provider does not offer COVID-19 testing, and you are concerned about your health, you should contact a different healthcare provider.

Testing is prioritized for high-risk individuals and those that may pose a risk to the public according to the guidelines released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

**16. What do I do if I am sick and do not have a health care provider?**

Call an urgent care center to discuss your symptoms.

**17. I have symptoms or respiratory illness, but my primary care doctor will not test me for COVID-19. What do I do?**

You should follow instructions provided by your doctor, even if they do not test you. If you are sick, please stay home until 72 hours after symptoms have resolved without using fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol. Make sure to wash your hands frequently, clean surfaces you touch and cover every cough and sneeze with a tissue.

**18. When will I get my test results?**

Your results could take more than a week depending on which lab performed the test and the risk to you and your community. Your healthcare provider will provide you with your results. Due to privacy laws, the state lab (Bureau of Laboratories) will not be able to provide you with results, even if the test is conducted there.

**If your symptoms get worse while you are waiting for results, contact your healthcare provider.**

**19. Do our healthcare workers have enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?**

There is a nation-wide shortage of PPE. MDHHS is taking necessary steps to order and distribute emergency material, including PPE, to frontline health care workers. Responding agencies should work with local emergency management to request PPE if it is needed.

PPE is being acquired through:

- Strategic National Stockpile Allocation
- Leveraging emergency procurement with PPE manufacturers
- Collection of donated material

MDHHS provided guidelines to healthcare providers, facilities and EMS agencies including:

- How to properly use PPE
- How to optimize the use of PPE

If you have PPE to donate: [www.Michigan.gov/FightCOVID19](http://www.Michigan.gov/FightCOVID19)

**20. Can I sew a facemask to use for myself or to donate to healthcare workers?**

Yes. There are lots of cost-effective ways to make a covering for your face to wear in public. The [U.S. Surgeon General created a video](#) to show cost-free ways to cover your face. [The CDC has also shared ways to create or sew](#) a face covering for yourself.

Some healthcare agencies may accept donations of masks, you will want to check to see if they have any requirements for accepting donations before sewing. For example, some agencies prefer the inside and outside of masks be different colors so healthcare workers can easily tell which side should be against their face.

For information about what types of donations the state is collecting, please visit:

[www.Michigan.gov/FightCOVID19](http://www.Michigan.gov/FightCOVID19)

**21. Why doesn't the state provide more details about the location and hospital of patients who test positive or are being treated?**

The HIPAA Privacy Rule protects the privacy of patients' health information but, also allows for some disclosures of information when necessary to protect the state's public health from immediate threats.

In an emergency, reasonable safeguards must remain in place to protect certain patient information against intentional or unintentional prohibited use. In most cases, reasonable efforts must be made to limit the information disclosed to that which is the minimum necessary to prevent the spread of a disease like COVID-19.

That often includes providing general information on patient's county or age, while not disclosing their exact location. Providing the minimum necessary information is also important for the overall safety and security of the patient, while protecting others' health.

**22. Does the state monitor travelers returning to Michigan?**

MDHHS receives daily referrals about travelers from the CDC airport quarantine stations. Once MDHHS receives the referral, the information is provided to the local health department in the community where the traveler lives. Local health department staff contact the individual, assess their risk and may supervise daily for health monitoring (temperature, cough, difficulty breathing) for 14 days after their last day of exposure.

**23. How are people monitored after they are exposed to the virus?**

Public health professionals contact individuals with COVID-19 to ask questions about what people they have recently been in contact with to learn who else might have been exposed to the virus. People who are identified as close contacts of a person with diagnosed COVID-19 will be contacted to determine the status of their health (do they have symptoms of respiratory illness?) and advised to self-quarantine or self-isolate based on their situation and monitor themselves for symptoms.

- Isolation is for people who have symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Quarantine is for people who may have been exposed (close contacts) but do not have any symptoms.
- The local health department has legal authority to mandate quarantine or isolation for people. They will make this decision based on possible contacts and symptoms in order to stop the virus from spreading.

#### **24. Did the state limit the use of drugs to treat COVID-19?**

No. The state has not limited or disallowed the use of any drug to treat COVID-19. The state has [issued a reminder](#) to health care providers that prescribing medications like hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine in anticipation of future illness, may create a shortage of the drug for those who are currently prescribed the medication for chronic conditions.

This guidance was issued after the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) received multiple allegations of these drugs being prescribed inappropriately. **If your doctor chooses to use either of these drugs in the treatment of your course of illness, they will be able to prescribe this for you.**

#### **Category: Executive Orders**

##### **What is a state of emergency? Does it indicate the severity of a situation?**

A state of emergency declaration is simply a way to free up resources. It is a temporary order that allows the governor to assist communities in need better and faster by making resources immediately available. It also makes it easier for the state to seek federal assistance during and after a natural disaster, pandemic and more.

##### **I am planning or attending a conference or event, do I have to cancel it?**

The Stay Home, Stay Safe Executive Order does not permit people to leave their homes for conferences or events. Planners working on future events should prepare for the

possibility that these restrictions may still be in place. As of now, we do not know how long gathering restrictions will be necessary.

### **Category: Information for Businesses and Employers**

#### **I have an employee who was diagnosed with COVID-19? What should I do next?**

You should let your employees know that they may have been exposed to COVID-19. Do not identify the person with COVID-19. Make sure your employees are advised of the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#) and to contact their health care provider if they are ill and concerned about their health.

Best practices for employers:

1. Encourage employees to **stay home when they are sick** and follow proper hygiene.
2. Send home employees who develop symptoms of respiratory illness while at work.
3. Follow recommendations for return to work, including not requiring a doctor's note or test result to return. Due to prioritization of specimen testing supplies, healthcare providers are not able to order tests for work clearance.

Employees (non-healthcare) who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 should not return to work until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since symptoms have resolved without the use of fever-reducing medications, and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, **and**
- at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared, or since the first positive COVID-19 test, if tested.

#### **Do I need to close my business if someone that works here is diagnosed with COVID-19?**

No. You should perform a thorough cleaning:

- Clean all frequently touched surfaces including workstations, countertops, doorknobs, and elevator buttons.
- Use cleaning agents that are usually used per your industry standards and follow the directions on the label.

[Detailed cleaning guidance](#) is available from the CDC. Remember to follow guidelines for communicating with employees and when the employee can return to work.

### **Will the local health department reach out to my business if we have a positive case of COVID-19?**

The local health department oversees investigations into COVID-19 cases. They follow up with **people** who may have been in contact with the patient and may release any locations a patient visited, if they cannot fully account for all potential contacts.

### **Category: Michigan's Early Response**

#### **What did Michigan do early on to prevent the spread of COVID-19?**

MDHHS began working with local health departments, healthcare coalitions, hospital and healthcare partners when the novel coronavirus outbreak began in Wuhan, China. Initial focus was working with federal partners to ensure that Michigan's public health system could support traveler screening and monitoring to limit the entry of cases into the U.S.

Hospitals and healthcare partners were also engaged to establish screening procedures for any patients presenting for care with a travel history and symptoms that could be indicative of a possible COVID-19 case. These activities have mirrored much of the public health response to recent Ebola outbreaks.

Furthermore, Michigan has a surveillance system to detect cases and clusters associated with an infectious disease outbreak as reported by healthcare providers, emergency departments and local health departments. In addition, emergency medical service (EMS) agencies have been working closely with MDHHS to report and investigate clusters of respiratory illness requiring EMS transfers to hospitals. These systems are reviewed daily to warn of potential outbreaks of illness, including COVID-19.

While MDHHS was implementing those activities, there was considerable effort put into planning for the next phase of this outbreak, including:

- On Feb. 3, MDHHS activated the Community Health Emergency Coordination Center to coordinate with local health departments.
- On Feb. 28, Gov. Gretchen Whitmer activated the State Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate the state's response.
- On March 3, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced the creation of four task forces to combat the spread of coronavirus and respond to the impact it may have

on Michiganders' day-to-day lives. These task forces include: State Operations, Health and Human Services, Education, and Economy/Workforce.

- On March 10, the State Emergency Operations Center Joint Information Center was activated to assist with the public information effort
- On March 10, Governor Gretchen Whitmer declared a state of emergency to slow the spread of COVID-19.