

## **What is Coronavirus?**

The Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) is a new virus strain that is believed to spread in similar ways as the common cold / flu, such as when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed cases.

Symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets produced by coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, like shaking hands
- Touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands.

## **How to protect yourself**

You can protect yourself from COVID-19 infection the same ways you protect against the common cold or seasonal flu.

- Sanitize your hands often for at least 20 seconds each time. Alcohol gel works well in most situations (like after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose), but handwashing with soap and water should be performed after going to the bathroom, before eating or when your hands are visibly soiled.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. (Putting a tissue on a table contaminates the surface of the table with germs.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Routinely disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, using a cleaning spray or wipe.
- Avoid travel to high-risk countries. We are discouraging non-essential travel to or through any of the countries for which the CDC has issued a level 2 or 3 travel health notice (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>)

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. You should only wear a mask if a healthcare professional recommends it. A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms of infection like coughing, sneezing or fever. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.

## **What to do if you are sick**

- Use home quarantine or home isolation: Stay home if you believe you have been exposed to the virus, even if you are not showing any symptoms. Please see below for home quarantine instructions.
- Stay home when you are sick, especially if you have respiratory illness symptoms. At the present time, these symptoms are more likely due to influenza or other respiratory viruses than to a COVID-19 infection. Whether you have seasonal flu or the common cold, it's important you stay away from others when sick.

- Monitor yourself for fever, coughing and shortness of breath.

### **When you should seek medical evaluation and advice?**

- If you have an emergency medical situation, call 9-1-1.
- If you are over 60 years old, or have underlying conditions such as pregnancy, diabetes, palpitations, lung disease and weakened immune system, work with your doctor to develop a plan to determine your health risks to coronavirus and how to manage symptoms. If you do have symptoms, contact your doctor immediately.
- For worsening symptoms or difficulty breathing, please contact your primary care provider or consider a virtual visit.
- If you do not have a high-risk condition and your symptoms are mild, you do not need to be evaluated in person and do not need to be tested for COVID-19. (Please see Home Quarantine and Isolation Instructions below)

We ask that you please avoid coming to the emergency department, unless you have a health emergency and/or you have been advised by a provider to do so. This helps prevent the risk of spreading this disease and further exposure in our community and allows us to dedicate critical and limited emergency resources to those who are very sick.

### **Who should be tested?**

A common question right now is, “Why can't I get tested?” The answer: Not everyone needs to be tested. And, people with flu-like symptoms are not being tested for COVID-19 unless they meet certain criteria set by the CDC. The criteria are set by the CDC as a condition of the FDA-approved emergency use authorization, which allows new tests to be used in an emergency situation on high-risk people only. That criteria have widened in the last week to include people who are hospitalized with symptoms that are otherwise unexplained. That is in addition to testing people with travel history, and people with contacts to a known case. These criteria may evolve to include more people over time, as this situation is evolving rapidly.

### **Home Quarantine and Isolation Instructions**

If you are currently sick with a fever, respiratory symptoms or a virus, you should avoid exposure to others. If you have a possible significant exposure to COVID-19 because of travel or direct exposure to a known case, the current recommendation is for you to stay home for 7 days (home quarantine) even if you do not develop symptoms or your illness has improved. If you are ill, we recommend avoiding exposure to others (home isolation) until you have been well (without a fever or feeling ill) for 72 hours. Many patients will have a prolonged cough after they are sick – if you are otherwise well, contact your doctor or one of the noted resources to determine if it is safe to return to your usual activities.

Guidelines for home quarantine and home isolation include:

- Stay at home and do not have visitors.
- Do not go to another person's home.
- Do not use public transportation
- Restrict activities outside your home, except for seeking medical care.
- Do not go to work, school or public areas.

- Avoid close contact with household members (stay 10 feet away when possible).
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces every day.
- Use separate sleeping and bathroom/bathing facilities, if feasible.
- Avoid sharing personal household items (dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding) with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.
- Call ahead before visiting your doctor. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.
- If you have been tested for COVID-19, stay home until your healthcare provider contacts you about your test results.

### **Does this mean my family or other people I live with need to self-quarantine?**

Other members of the household are not required to self-quarantine, unless they have been told by a medical professional to do so. If you develop symptoms and are suspected to have novel coronavirus, members of the household will be classified as close contacts and will then need to be in self-quarantine.

### **How is this Virus Treated?**

Most people with common human coronavirus illness will recover on their own. There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

### **Additional Information**

For up to date information about coronavirus and the community public health response, visit your local public health website

- CDC: COVID-19: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

## **Asymptomatic patients with travel/contact risk:**

CDC approved home care advice for well patients with an epidemiological risk:

Monitor yourself for cough, fever (greater or equal to 100.4 F, or difficulty breathing, or other signs of illness).

- Check your temperature at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.
- Record the reading on a piece of paper.
- Don't eat, drink, chew gum, or brush your teeth for 30 minutes before taking your temperature.
- Do not let anyone else use the thermometer during this period.

During the monitoring period you should:

- Avoid travel via public transportation (no ride shares, taxi, airplanes, ships, buses, trams, or trains).

- Avoid having people (e.g., friends, family, coworkers) over to your home.
- Avoid public places or activities that bring you in close contact, within 6 feet of others.
- Don't share personal household items like cups, glasses, utensils, toothbrushes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel (both are effective).
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces every day.
- It is ok to go to work and school, if you are well and do not have a fever (greater or equal to 100.4 F).

If you develop above symptoms,

- Cover your cough and avoid direct contact with household members and others.
- Contact your primary care provider as needed. During off hours, contact ProvRN.
- If you can't contact your primary care provider, or are very ill, call 911 and tell them you are at risk for novel coronavirus and have developed symptoms.
- Call your PCP on day 6-8 of your illness so we can check on you (sooner if your symptoms are severe)

## **Symptomatic patients with/without travel/contact risk:**

CDC approved home care advice for stable patients that have symptoms with or without an epidemiological link that do not require hospitalization:

Monitor your cough, fever, and/or difficulty breathing.

- Check your temperature several times daily, before you take medications intended to lower fever. Record the reading on a piece of paper.
- Don't eat, drink, chew gum, or brush your teeth for 30 minutes before taking your temperature
- Do not let anyone else use the thermometer during this period.
- Cover your cough and avoid direct contact with household members and others.
- Contact your primary care provider as needed. During off hours, contact ProvRN.
- If you can't contact your primary care provider and are very ill, call 911 and tell them you are at risk for novel coronavirus and have severe symptoms.
- Call your PCP on day 6-8 of your illness so we can check on you. It is usually safe to return to work/school when your fever is gone at least 72 hours (without fever lowering medications), and your symptoms are improved.
- For patients with confirmed COVID-19 following testing, you may return to work either 7 days after the positive test or 72 hours after resolution of both fever and cough (without fever lowering medications), whichever is longer.

During your illness you should:

- Avoid travel via public transportation (no airplanes, ships, buses, trams, or trains).
- Stay home from work and school.
- Avoid having people (e.g., friends, family, coworkers) over to your home.
- Avoid public places or activities that bring you in close contact, within 6 feet, of others.
- Don't share personal household items like cups, glasses, utensils, toothbrushes.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand gel (both are effective).
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces every day.

**If your flu test is negative:**

- A COVID-19 (coronavirus) test will be run.
- The COVID-19 test will take an additional 1 to 3 days to run, but may take up to 7 to 10 business days depending on lab capacity.
- We will contact you by phone or MyChart when your lab results are back.

**If your flu test is positive:**

- It is usually safe to return to work or school after your fever is gone at least 24 hours (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications) and the symptoms of cough or shortness of breath are improved for at least 24 hours.

**If your COVID-19 test is negative:**

- You may return to work or school once your fever has resolved for at least 24 hours and symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications).

**If your COVID-19 test is positive:**

- You will get a phone call with next steps.
- You may return to work either 7 days after the positive test or 72 hours after resolution of fever AND symptoms, whichever is longer (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications), shortness of breath or cough, whichever is longer.

**General Guidance:**

Call your Primary Care Provider (PCP) if your symptoms do not improve or if they get worse.

- If your clinic is closed, call ProvRN at 800-700-0481.
- If you cannot contact your primary care provider and you are very ill, call 911. Tell them you are at risk for novel coronavirus and have severe symptoms.

If FMLA or disability paperwork is needed, please contact your primary care office.

**Things to do while you are sick:**

- Drink plenty of fluids:
  - Clear liquids like water, clear broth, herbal tea, or warm lemon water are good choices.
  - Warm liquids help soothe sore throats.
  - Avoid caffeine and alcohol. These can dehydrate you.
- Take medicines as recommended by your provider:
  - If you are taking other medicines, check with the pharmacist who has your complete list of medicines to ensure nothing will interact.
  - Over-the-counter cough medicine may temporarily help control or quiet a cough.
  - Sore Throat Care:
    - Over-the-counter sore throat lozenges or spray may help numb a sore throat.
    - Sore throats can be soothed without medication by gargling with saltwater:
      - Dissolve ¼ to ½ teaspoon of salt in 4 to 8 ounces (about half a glass) of warm water.
  - Fever or body aches can be treated with Tylenol (acetaminophen). Follow the directions on the package.

- Avoid NSAID medicines like Advil or Motrin (ibuprofen), or Aleve (naproxen).
- Get plenty of rest.

**To avoid sharing your illness:**

- Please stay home and at least 6 feet away from people while you are sick.
  - Avoid using public transportation (no airplanes, ships, buses, trams, or trains).
  - Avoid having people (like friends, family, or coworkers) over to your home.
  - Avoid public places or activities that bring you in close contact with others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand gel (both are effective).
- Cover your cough.
- Do not share personal household items like cups, glasses, utensils, and toothbrushes.
- Clean all “high touch” surfaces, such as countertops, door handles, light switches, computers, or phones every day

XXXXXXXXX has been evaluated for a possible COVID-19 infection. The patient is being asked to self-quarantine due to risk of COVID-19. Based on patient risk factors, we recommend:

**If the patient is not deemed medically appropriate for testing and therefore *NOT* tested**

- Patient may return to work or school 72 hours after resolution of fever and symptoms (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications).

**If the test is *NEGATIVE* for COVID-19:**

- Patient may return to work or school once their fever has resolved for at least 24 hours and symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications).

**If the test is *POSITIVE* for COVID-19:**

- Patient should only return to work either 7 days after the positive test or 72 hours after resolution of fever AND symptoms, whichever is longer (Temperature over 100.4F without taking fever-lowering medications), shortness of breath or cough, whichever is longer.

**Well-Care information for patients concerned about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**

To limit the risk of spreading COVID-19 in the community, we are working with health officials to quickly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

The same steps that you take to prevent seasonal flu and the common cold are the same ones to take for preventing COVID-19. These steps are detailed further below.

**How COVID-19 is spread**

Health experts are still learning all the details about how COVID-19 is spread.

Similar illnesses spread from an infected person to others through:

- Coughing and sneezing.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something with the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.

**How severe is COVID-19?**

Reported cases of COVID-19 range from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires a stay in the hospital. So far, deaths have happened mainly with older adults who had other health conditions. 80% of people have only mild symptoms.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

Symptoms to look for are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms may appear between 2 and 14 days after exposure to the virus.

***If you develop any of these symptoms, call your Primary Care Provider. They will determine the safest way for you to receive care.***

### **Can I be tested for COVID-19?**

Providence is performing limited coronavirus (COVID-19) testing, focusing on very ill patients and those who are at high risk for complications. Please talk with your doctor if you develop a fever, cough, or shortness of breath and are concerned.

### **How to prevent the spread of illness:**

Avoid groups or events with 10 attendees where you can't maintain a distance of at least 3 feet between individuals (large family gatherings, weddings, concerts, festivals, sporting events, etc)

Steps you can take to prevent spread of the flu and common cold will also help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not recommend wearing a facemask to protect yourself from COVID-19. There is little proof that wearing a mask limits exposure or decreases your risk of illness. Wearing a mask may also lead to a false sense of security making it less likely you will take the best steps for decreasing your risk of infection.

Masks are useful for those who are already ill by preventing the spread of the virus through coughs or sneezes.

### **How is COVID-19 treated?**

There are no medications specifically approved for the treatment of COVID-19.

Most people with a mild case of COVID-19 will recover on their own by:

- Drinking plenty of fluids.
- Getting lots of rest.
- Taking over the counter pain and fever medications.

However, some severe cases may develop into pneumonia and require medical care or hospitalization.