

Pandemic COVID-19 Discharge Education

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19, or commonly called the “Coronavirus,” is an illness that can affect your lungs and airways. Though most cases are mild, some are severe or even fatal. It spreads in the same way as the common cold; mostly in droplets from coughing or sneezing. The droplets travel only about 6 feet in the air, but they remain infectious for hours on surfaces after they fall. You become infected when these droplets contact your eyes or the inside of your nose or mouth, either directly from the air or carried on your own hands.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, sore throat, cough, and difficulty breathing. Some people have a loss of smell, tiredness, body aches, and runny nose.

There is no specific treatment yet for COVID-19. Though most people have mild symptoms and can recover at home on their own, some are required to go to the hospital. People who are at greater risk have one or more of these conditions:

- older adults
- chronic lung disease
- diabetes
- heart disease
- severe obesity
- liver disease
- kidney disease
- severely compromised immune system

How can you avoid getting COVID-19?

COVID-19 spreads from person to person and can be spread by those who are infected but don't display symptoms.

- Practice social distancing. Avoid large groups and stay at least 6 feet away from other people.
- Wear non-medical, cloth-based mask (covering nose and mouth) in public settings where social distancing is difficult. Your mask protects others from you and also protects you from them.
- Wash hands (at least 20 seconds) frequently, especially after being in shared rooms (restrooms, living rooms, kitchen and bedroom) and in contact with high touch surfaces like doorknobs and light switches.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your sneeze or cough with a tissue, then throw in the trash. Cough / sneeze into elbow if tissue is not available.
- Clean living areas frequently (including laundering clothing, bath towels and bedding); disinfect surfaces and high touch areas (phones, remote controls, pens, mail, faucets, doors handles/railings, steering wheel, grocery carts, etc.).

What to do if you develop symptoms:

- Speak to your health care provider if you develop fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- If you develop trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, call 911.
- Keep away from others who are sick and continue to practice the everyday actions above.
- Choose a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- Keep adequate supply of medications, food, fluids and cleaning supplies to minimize need for public outings.
- Create a list of local organizations you and your household can contact in the case of emergent needs (Health care providers, County Assistance Office, EMS and/or charitable organizations).

Access to health care has been impacted. Health care providers are wearing personal protective equipment (masks, gowns and gloves) to help reduce risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Be safe and stay informed about local COVID-19 activity through public health officials on local news and radio stations, as well as through the Department of Health and CDC websites (www.CDC.gov).