

ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

What is COVID-19?

What are the signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and how soon do they appear?

- Common symptoms include: fever, runny nose, dry cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath.
- Additional symptoms might include: chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

How do you get Covid-19?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person-to-person, though much is unknown about how it is acquired.
- The best way to prevent infection is avoiding exposure to the virus.
- Research shows coronavirus can be spread not just by sneezes or coughs, but also just by talking, or possibly even just breathing.
- A person may be able to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching their own mouth, nose, or their eyes.

How is COVID-19 different from the flu and the common cold?

- COVID-19 spreads faster and can be more severe and deadly than influenza or the common cold.
- Most coronavirus infections cause very similar types of respiratory illness in the beginning.
- COVID-19 illness has ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death.

How infectious is the virus that causes COVID-19 and how far can the virus travel in the air?

- Person-to-person spread usually happens with close contact (within 6 ft.) with an infected person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is most often spread by large airborne droplets.
- Experts warn that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be carried by small airborne droplets (aerosols) up to 6ft. but are unclear about how dangerous they are.
- Surfaces potentially contaminated with the virus must be thoroughly disinfected.
- Cloth face coverings may help reduce spreading large airborne droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Frequent cleaning of surfaces should be one of many personal hygiene practices, including handwashing, to prevent spreading the virus.
- Disinfecting of high-use surfaces is very effective for preventing illness; surfaces should be sanitized with soap, disinfecting sprays, or wipes.

How long does the virus that causes COVID-19 live on surfaces?

- When the virus that causes COVID-19 lands on a surface it starts to break down and can be cleaned from surfaces.
- Virus survival depends on the type of surface material. The virus that causes COVID-19 may be able to last as long as 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel, up to 1 day on cardboard, and up to 4 hours on copper.



ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

COVID-19 Symptoms

Why do some people have very severe COVID-19 illness while most people do not?

- Most experts agree that there may be no single reason for why some people are more severely affected than others.
- Experts believe that age, health, genetics, access to quality care, and underlying conditions are important to the severity of COVID-19.
- Experts believe that environmental factors are important to the severity of COVID-19.

Can a person spread the virus that causes COVID-19 even if they have no symptoms?

- People can infect others with the virus before showing symptoms, but can be highly contagious when they show signs of being sick and are most symptomatic (the sickest).

Prevention

What can people do to prevent infection with COVID-19?

- The best way to prevent infection is avoiding exposure to the virus.
- Face coverings may help to prevent infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 in healthy people.
- Everyday basic hygiene is important to prevent infection.
- People should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after bringing in packages, or after trips to the grocery store or other places where they may have come into contact with infected surfaces. When soap and water is not available use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Are cloth face coverings useful to prevent COVID-19?

- Cloth face coverings may help reduce the spread of the virus from people who are infected, including those who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic people).
- Face coverings should be worn in public to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

How long will it be necessary to have social distancing in the U.S.?

- Social distancing will be important until there is widespread testing, preventive medicines, treatments, and vaccines against COVID-19.
- Social distancing will likely persist while COVID-19 continues to spread.
- If COVID-19 cannot be controlled under relaxed social distancing, a return to more strict measures may be needed.

ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

Public Guidelines and Testing

What should I do if I had close contact with someone with COVID-19?

- Inform your health care provider.
- Inform yourself about person-to-person spreading of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Call your health care provider if you notice symptoms of COVID-19.
- You should monitor yourself for fever, dry cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath during the 10 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19.
- If seeing a health care provider is not possible, you can check with our local Public Health Department website for advice on next steps.
- Call before you show up for care to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others.
- Follow expert advice, verify information, and avoid dangerous myths and rumors.

What are the different types of COVID-19 tests?

- There are diagnostic and antibody tests for COVID-19.
- There are COVID-19 tests for antigens (virus particles that create an antibody).

What is contact tracing and how will it be done?

- Contact tracing is a key public health strategy for preventing further spread of COVID-19.
- Communities are working to train a large contact tracing workforce.
- Public awareness and acceptance of contact tracing is critical.

What is isolation and quarantine?

- Isolation separates infected people from others.
- Quarantine separates individuals believed to have been exposed who are not yet ill.
- Isolation and quarantine are effective control measures for COVID-19 if you are receiving a positive result.

Should people go outdoors, including exercise?

- Getting outdoors is one of the best ways to keep one's mind and body healthy.
- When leaving the house, take steps to reduce your risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.
- Staying physically active is a health coping strategy for COVID-19.

Are there any restrictions on people who have recovered from a confirmed COVID-19 infection?

- Public Health Restrictions for returning to work and everyday life are based upon either symptoms, time, or testing.
- Scientists are still uncertain whether people who have recovered from COVID-19 can get it again (have protective immunity).
 - A person recovered from COVID-19 should adhere to public health guidelines regarding work and everyday life.



ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

Who is at risk?

Who is most at risk and how can individuals reduce their risk of COVID-19?

- Older adults and people with underlying illnesses are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
- People who have a high Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or above, uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension are also vulnerable.
- Practicing everyday preventative measures is very important.
- If you know someone who is at increased risk, help them stay healthy.
- Persons who have symptoms of COVID-19 should not visit the elderly in their homes or in nursing homes.
- If you live with a person at increased risk, make sure to wash your hands every time you come in from outside.

Does COVID-19 affect children and adults differently?

- Older adults and people with underlying health conditions are at greatest risk for severe illness.
- Youth appears to offer some protection from severe COVID-19 illness.
- People in all age groups can help slow spread of COVID-19.

What about pregnant women and COVID-19?

- Experts believe pregnancy does not increase risk of COVID-19 or developing severe symptoms.
- Given that this is a novel virus, little is known about its impact on pregnant women.
- Experts believe that pregnant women are just as likely as anyone else to develop symptoms if infected with the virus that causes COVID-19.

Why are rates of infection, severe illness, and death from COVID-19 higher among African America, Native American, and Hispanic-Americans?

- Data indicate that African- and Hispanic-Americans are at higher risk of COVID-19.
- Living conditions, work circumstances, underlying health conditions, and access to care contribute to higher rates of COVID-19 disease among African- and Hispanic-Americans.
- Authorities and the public can help address COVID-19 racial and minority disparities.

How deadly is COVID-19?

- Older people and those with underlying medical conditions are more likely to die from this virus.
- Most people with COVID-19 have mild symptoms and survive, but it can be deadly.

ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

Treatment

What are the highest-priority medical interventions being developed for COVID-19?

- A safe and effective vaccine for COVID-19 is the ultimate control tool.
- Medicines that can prevent new COVID-19 cases are being explored.
- Currently there are no specific medical treatments proven safe and effective against COVID-19.

How long will it take to develop a vaccine for COVID-19?

- A massive effort is underway to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 using exciting new technology.
- New vaccines have to first be tested to see if they are safe and effective.
- Initial supplies of a COVID-19 vaccine would be for those at highest risk of infection.

Are the anti-malaria drugs hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine safe and effective treatment for COVID-19?

- Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine have not been proven to be safe and effective for treating COVID-19.
- Medical interventions other than hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine are being tested for safety and effectiveness.
- Hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine can be used to treat malaria and medical conditions other than COVID-19.

Traveling and Packaging

How effective are travel restrictions and quarantines?

- Travel restrictions and quarantines help limit the spread of contagious disease and can help public health authorities control outbreaks.
- Effective travel restrictions and quarantine alone may not stop disease spread.

Should people be concerned about travel within the U.S.?

- Travelling increases the chances of getting COVID-19.
- When travelling, people should practice good hygiene and minimize close contact with others.
- Avoiding non-essential travel, especially where transmission (spreading) is widespread. People should continue to stay informed by following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. State Department travel websites for the latest information.
- People who have COVID-19 symptoms should try to postpone traveling.

How are international travel restriction decisions made?

- International travel restrictions must balance risk of exposure against costs of disrupting the economy.
- The U.S. has imposed international travel restrictions as a result of widespread transmission of COVID-19.

Can you get COVID-19 from mail packages or imported goods that arrive from infected areas?

- The virus that causes COVID-19 may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days, but the true health significance is still unknown.
 - Initial studies suggest the virus that causes COVID-19 can survive on surfaces for at least a few hours and may survive on plastic, glass, and metal for several days.
 - Virus survival varies under different conditions, such as type of surface, temperature, or humidity.



ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

Preparing for our Future with COVID-19

Will COVID-19 continue next year as a pandemic?

- It is too early to know whether COVID-19 will continue as a pandemic next year, but what is known is that it can be shortened by reducing new cases through widespread testing, social distancing, contact tracing, treatments, and vaccines.
- Experts believe that the COVID-19 can be shortened with preventive behaviors that reduce new cases.
- Everyone should follow preventative practices guidance, especially social distancing.
- Wash your hands often, avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, and cover coughs and sneezes.
- People should wear face covering in public to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- People should clean frequently touched surfaces with regular household cleaners.
- People should follow expert guidance and avoid dangerous unproven myths and rumors.

If social distancing works, will we have another spike in cases?

- If social distancing is effectively implemented, COVID-19 cases are unlikely to spike.
- Social distancing will best prevent spikes when combined with widespread testing, preventive medicines, treatments, and vaccines against COVID-19.
- If COVID-19 spikes, then the U.S. will need more strict social distancing measures.

When will there be a return to everyday life and work activities?

- A return towards everyday life and work will occur when there is widespread testing, preventive medicines, treatments, and vaccines against COVID-19.
- A return towards everyday life and work will occur when COVID-19 stops spreading.
- Until COVID-19 is controlled, a return to everyday life and work will look different.

When and how will the COVID-19 pandemic end?

- It is too early to know whether COVID-19 will persist as a pandemic next year.
- The COVID-19 pandemic will end sooner with widespread testing, preventive medicines, contact tracing, treatments, and vaccines.
- Experts believe that the COVID-19 pandemic will end sooner provided their public continues with preventive behaviors.

How can individuals prepare for COVID-19?

- By social distancing and following recommendations from their state and communities.
- Individuals should create a household plan of action.
- Individuals should practice every day basic hygiene to help prevent infection.

What can employers do to prepare for COVID-19?

- Employers should plan for extended absences of employees and encourage working from home.
 - Employers should apply infection control measures in the office.
 - Employers should stay informed and clearly communicate updates to employees.

