

COVID-19 | FAQ

What is COVID-19?

The coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that is spreading in the Milwaukee community. The first cases were found in China and have since spread around the world. The virus is not associated with any particular race, ethnicity, culture or age. Anyone is susceptible to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has a potential to cause severe illness in some people. It is spread through droplets in the air from people coughing or sneezing and can also live on surfaces like cardboard for 24 hours or on plastic for up to 3 days.

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

Most people who have COVID-19 have little to no symptoms, but some people do and might have to go to the hospital. Most people who get sick from COVID-19 start to feel these symptoms between two and 14 days after they catch it.

Symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Body or muscle aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste

Not everyone with COVID-19 has all of these symptoms. For many, symptoms are mild, with no fever. It is important to know that you can still spread (transmit) the virus to others even if you have mild or no symptoms.

How does COVID-19 spread from person to person?

COVID-19 is spread through droplets in the air from people coughing or sneezing and can also live on surfaces like cardboard for 24 hours or on plastic for up to 3 days.

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person when people are in close contact with one another. When an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks these droplets can land in mouths, noses, or be breathed in by people who are in close contact.

It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 from touching a surface or object that has the virus and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.

COVID-19 is very easily to spread between people. CDC has indicated that COVID-19 spreads easier between people than the seasonal flu.

Can COVID-19 be caught from a person who has no symptoms?

The main way the disease spreads is through respiratory droplets expelled by someone who is

coughing. The risk of catching COVID-19 from someone with no symptoms at all is very low. However, many people with COVID-19 experience only mild symptoms. This is particularly true at the early stages of the disease. It is therefore possible to catch COVID-19 from someone who has, for example, just a mild cough and does not feel ill. The World Health Organization (WHO) is assessing ongoing research on the period of transmission of COVID-19 and will continue to share updated findings.

What can I do to protect myself and prevent the spread of the disease?

To stop the spread of COVID-19:

- Staying home with your family
- Washing hands and surfaces often
- Keeping six feet or more away from others in public spaces
- Do not meet in group of any size
- Covering your nose and mouth with a mask. This mask can be made from cloth. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

You can learn more about the current situation at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) or by calling 2-1-1.

Who is at risk of getting COVID-19?

Anyone who is close to someone who is infected with COVID-19 is at risk for catching the virus. The virus is not associated with any particular race, ethnicity, culture or age. Anyone is susceptible to COVID-19. This virus is now spreading person to person in the Milwaukee community.

How can I prevent getting COVID-19?

There is no vaccine to prevent you from getting sick with COVID-19. Do the following to prevent getting COVID-19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after you have been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not easily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Try to not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice physical distancing of 6 feet or more from other people. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.
- Stay home, save lives to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19 in the Milwaukee community.
- Always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- The CDC is recommending the use of a cloth face covering to keep people who are infected but do not have symptoms from spreading COVID-19 to others. Learn more at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html).
- The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Medical face masks are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders, as recommended by CDC.
- 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. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Be sure to follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet for several minutes to ensure germs are

killed. Many also recommend precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Do I need to wear a mask?

YES! A person can spread COVID-19 to others without having any symptoms of the virus. COVID-19 symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

Cloth face coverings can be used as a mask. These face coverings can be made from t-shirts, scarves, bandanas, or other cloth materials. Everyone should wear a cloth face mask when going out in public areas where physical distancing may be challenging like grocery stores and pharmacies. These cloth face masks are meant to protect other people in case you are infected.

Cloth face masks should not be placed on young children under the age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face mask without assistance.

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Even when wearing a cloth face mask, please practice good physical distancing of 6 feet from other people. The cloth face mask is not a substitute for physical distancing.

To learn more from the CDC about how to wear and make a cloth face mask visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html).

How do you treat COVID-19?

Most people who have COVID-19 get better just by resting, drinking fluids, and treating the symptoms of COVID-19. There is no vaccine for COVID-19. If you think you may have been infected with COVID-19, contact your health care provider immediately by phone. Follow all the care instructions from your health care provider and local health department. They may give instructions on checking and reporting your symptoms.

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the operator that you have or think you might have COVID-19. If possible, put on a face covering before medical arrives.

Emergency warning signs of COVID-19 are:

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

This list does not include all of the possible emergency warning signs. Contact 911 for any other symptoms that are severe.

What should you do if you are around someone who has COVID 19?

The symptoms you should look for are:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Body or muscle aches
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste

If you get any of these symptoms within 14 days of being around someone with COVID-19 coronavirus, call your health care provider right away. Tell your provider that you might have had contact with someone with coronavirus and tell them your symptoms.

I think I may have novel coronavirus (COVID-19). What should I do?

If you are having a medical emergency, please call 911. If you have health concerns that are not a medical emergency, please call your doctor before going in-person to a clinic or hospital. Your doctor will provide you with the next steps you should take over the phone.

If you do not have a doctor, please contact one of these health systems:

- Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin- 414-805-2000
- Advocate Aurora Health - 1-866-443-2584
- Ascension Wisconsin - 833-981-0711
- You may also visit Children’s Wisconsin 24/7 Online Urgent Care at chw.org/medical-care/primary-care/urgent-care/online-urgent-care

If you do not have health insurance or you are not connected to a doctor, you may also reach out to one of the five Community Health Centers in Milwaukee:

- Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center – 414-383-9526
- Milwaukee Health Services, Inc. – 414-372-8080
- Outreach Community Health Center – 800-952-1086
- Progressive Community Health Center - 414-882-2040
- Sixteenth Street Community Health Center – 414-672-1353

Who can get tested for COVID-19?

If you have symptoms such as a cough or fever, but do not think you need to go to the doctor, stay home and rest. If you have trouble breathing or an emergency, call 911.

The rules for who is a priority for testing can change often. Please check back here for updates. COVID-19 symptoms may include cough, fever, and shortness of breath. People who work in health care or who are in the hospital will be prioritized for tests. High risk people such as people living in nursing homes or individuals with health problems will also be prioritized.

More information can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Human Services site What to Do If You Are Sick at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html and the CDC Priorities for Testing Patients with Suspected COVID-19 Infection at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/priority-testing-patients.pdf.

Additional testing information for Wisconsin can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Health Services COVID-19: Health Care Providers webpage under testing criteria at dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/providers.htm.

I received a COVID-19 test and am waiting for my test results.

What should I do now?

Follow the directions given to you by your doctor.

While waiting for your test results, stay home and stay away from other people including family and roommates living in your home. Stay in a separate room from your family members if possible. Drink plenty of water and rest while staying home.

Monitor your symptoms. If your symptoms get worse, such as shortness of breath, a worse cough, or fever (fever is over 101 for more than 3 days or your fever is over 100.4 for more than 5 days), call your doctor. If you experience a medical emergency, call 911.

Wear a cloth face covering over your nose and mouth if you need to be around others. For more information on creating a homemade cloth face covering, please view the CDC resource on the use of cloth face coverings at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html).

I am traveling or just returned from a trip. What should I do?

Travel guidelines are changing rapidly. For the most up-to-date information, visit the Department of Health Services at dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/index.htm.

What does isolation and quarantine mean?

Isolation and quarantine are two actions that can be taken by Public Health Agencies to help protect the public by preventing and containing the spread of a contagious disease. The goal is to stop more people from becoming infected. **Isolation** separates sick people who are known to have an illness or disease from people who are not sick. **Quarantine** separates and restricts the movement of people who have been exposed to an illness or disease while they are being monitored to determine whether they become sick. For COVID-19, the incubation period is a maximum of 14 days, therefore this is the time period that is used to determine the length of quarantine.

When Public Health Agencies takes the action of isolating or quarantining, then everyone involved may become part of the legal process. Wisconsin Statutes Chapter 252 Communicable Diseases, specifically § 252.06, authorizes the use of isolation and/or quarantine to stop the spread of a communicable disease.

What should patients do if they are quarantined?

While quarantined, the patient:

- May not leave their home or place of containment without prior approval by the health officer or their legal designee
- May not have contact with any new non-previously exposed people unless approved by the health officer
- Must be under medical supervision for monitoring, diagnostic testing and collection of blood and other samples
- May not remove or deface any warnings or placards posted by the health department
- Has the right to confer with legal counsel

Monitoring:

14 days after the last possible exposure/return from a level 3 area, the patient must:

- Take their temperature two-times daily; and (report above ~100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Watch for COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath); and
- On a daily basis permit a public health official to directly observe one or both of the temperature checks and review symptoms; and,
- Immediately report to public health officials if they have any symptoms; and,
- Discuss with public health officials their plans for activities so they can determine whether these are allowed.

Movement:

- Quarantined patients should not travel by any commercial conveyances (e.g., airplane, ship, long-distance bus, or train). Local use of public transportation (e.g., taxi, bus, subway) and travel should be discussed and coordinated with the public health department. If local public transportation is used, the patient must be able to exit quickly if they feel ill. Travel by private car is permitted.
- Do not go to bars, restaurants, shopping centers, theaters, church, or any public places where they will be sitting or standing less than 6 feet away from others.
- Do not go to their workplace (telework is permitted).
- Do not go to school (which is currently closed).
- Additional movement restrictions may be defined by your health department depending on circumstances (e.g. healthcare provider, first responders).

What is the guidance for emergency workers (MFD, MPD, EMS)?

Travel is not in the equation any longer for this group. If the individual came in contact (within 6 feet of the person) with a known case (someone who tested positive) for more than 10 minutes, they are required to self-quarantine and monitor for symptoms. Monitoring for symptoms means reporting immediately if the client has one or more of the following:

- Fever (100.4 or higher) **must take temperature two-times daily
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Will I be evicted if I can't afford my rent?

No, not at this time. Governor Evers had banned evictions and foreclosures in the state of Wisconsin for 60 days starting Friday March 27, 2020. Evictions are still allowed in domestic violence cases or when someone may face physical harm. This order does not include individuals on month-to-month leases. See also: evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EO15BanonEvictionsandForeclosures.pdf

Will my utilities be shut off if I can't afford to pay them?

No, not at this time. Governor Tony Evers of Wisconsin has issued Emergency Order #11 which states that public utilities will waive late feeds and temporarily suspend utility disconnections (unless needed for safety). More information can be found in Emergency Order #11 at evers.wi.gov/Documents/COVID19/EMO11-PSCRuleSuspensions.pdf