



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

CHARLES D. BAKER
Governor

KARYN E. POLITO
Lieutenant Governor

MARYLOU SUDDERS
Secretary

MONICA BHAREL, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Tel: 617-624-6000
www.mass.gov/dph

February 24, 2020

Dear School Administrator,

We are writing to you today with information and guidance regarding infection caused by the new coronavirus, now known as COVID-19, first identified in Wuhan, China in late December 2019.

At this time, Massachusetts has one confirmed case of COVID-19 and the risk to our residents remains low. At the same time, the risk for the influenza virus is very high.

The vast majority of reported cases of COVID-19 are in China. Confirmed cases of this respiratory virus associated with travel from Wuhan are also being reported in a growing number of countries, including the United States. Some person-to-person spread of this virus outside China has been detected but, again, the risk to Massachusetts residents remains low at this time.

We know that outbreaks of new virus infections are always of public health concern. The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other federal agencies, local boards of health, and our clinical partners to share the most up to date information available.

It is important to note that Massachusetts residents are much more likely to become sick with a cold or the flu than to be exposed to COVID-19. Many of the precautions that help prevent colds and the flu can help protect against other respiratory viruses.

Please share this with your school nurse and other school health personnel.

Recommended guidance

As of this writing, it is **extremely unlikely** that anyone with travel to mainland China within the past 14 days would be at school. As of February 3, 2020, travelers from mainland China are arriving into the U.S. at 11 airports (not including Logan airport in Boston) and are being screened upon entry. Travelers who are ill or who have traveled in the high-risk area of Hubei Province are being quarantined at the point of entry. Travelers from other parts of China without symptoms are being told to stay at home for 14 days from day of arrival.

If students, staff or volunteers do come to the nurse's office with a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing AND have traveled from China in the last 14 days OR are ill with fever, cough, or

difficulty breathing AND had recent close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case or had recent close contact with someone under investigation by public health authorities for COVID-19, these are guidelines to follow:

- Place the individual in a private room, ask them to wear a face mask and close the door.
- Ask the individual about symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing). Other symptoms could include: chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, vomiting, and diarrhea. If you are in the same room as the individual, wear a face mask and stand at least 6 feet away.
- If the individual requires immediate medical care, call 911 for an ambulance, inform EMS of the individual's recent travel to China.
- Call the DPH Epidemiology Line at 617-983-6800 or your local board of health for additional guidance.

The precautions to help prevent colds and the flu can help protect against COVID-19.

DPH recommends that schools continue education about good hygiene. Students, staff, and volunteers should be reminded to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, if unable to wash, use alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your coughs or sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve (not with your hands)
- Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick

Schools should follow their regular cleaning and disinfection program.

- Clean hard surfaces (desks, tables, countertops, sinks). Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, faucets, railings), bathrooms and health rooms. Use alcohol wipes to clean keyboards.
- Use "EPA-approved" disinfectant to clean high-touch surfaces and patient care areas.
- Clean the surface first to remove all organic matter. Thorough cleaning with soap and water will remove most microorganisms.
- Custodial staff is trained to use disinfectants in a safe and effective manner and to clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluid spills.

For more information

DPH has created a website updated constantly with the latest guidance, including printable fact sheets in multiple languages. Visit: www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus.

For questions, call the DPH Epidemiology Line at 24 hours a day/7 days a week at 617-983-6800.

For more, visit the CDC website at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Thank you for your help to keep our students and school personnel healthy and safe.



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), February 2020

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known about the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

CDC is working across the Department of Health and Human Services and across the U.S. government in the public health response to COVID-19. Much is unknown about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads. Current knowledge is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of

CDC Business Sector

Dr. Messonnier provides a situational update on COVID-19 for CDC private sector partners.

animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people, such as with MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV. The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading from person-to-person in China and some limited person-to-person transmission has been reported in countries outside China, including the United States. However, respiratory illnesses like seasonal influenza, are currently widespread in many US communities.

The following interim guidance may help prevent workplace exposures to acute respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in non-healthcare settings. The guidance also provides planning considerations if there are more widespread, community outbreaks of COVID-19.

To prevent stigma and discrimination in the workplace, use only the guidance described below to determine risk of COVID-19. Do not make determinations of risk based on race or country of origin, and be sure to maintain confidentiality of people with confirmed COVID-19. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features of COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. Updates are available on CDC's web page at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/covid19.

Recommended strategies for employers to use now:

- Actively encourage sick employees to stay home:
 - Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever (100.4° F [37.8° C] or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of a fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines (e.g. cough suppressants). Employees should notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
 - Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

CDC Industry Guidance

- Resources for Airlines
- Resources for the Ship Industry

- Talk with companies that provide your business with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop non-punitive leave policies.
- Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.
- Employers should maintain flexible policies that permit employees to stay home to care for a sick family member. Employers should be aware that more employees may need to stay at home to care for sick children or other sick family members than is usual.
- **Separate sick employees:**
 - CDC recommends that employees who appear to have acute respiratory illness symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and be sent home immediately. Sick employees should cover their noses and mouths with a tissue when coughing or sneezing (or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available).
- **Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees:**
 - Place posters that encourage staying home when sick, cough and sneeze etiquette, and hand hygiene at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
 - Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles for use by employees.
 - Instruct employees to clean their hands often with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95% alcohol, or wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
 - Provide soap and water and alcohol-based hand rubs in the workplace. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained. Place hand rubs in multiple locations or in conference rooms to encourage hand hygiene.
 - Visit the coughing and sneezing etiquette and clean hands webpage for more information.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning:**
 - Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
 - No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
 - Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- **Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps:**
 - Check the CDC's Traveler's Health Notices for the latest guidance and recommendations for each country to which you will travel. Specific travel information for travelers going to and returning from China, and information for aircrew, can be found at on the CDC website.
 - Advise employees to check themselves for symptoms of acute respiratory illness before starting travel and notify their supervisor and stay home if they are sick.
 - Ensure employees who become sick while traveling or on temporary assignment understand that they should notify their supervisor and should promptly call a healthcare provider for advice if needed.
 - If outside the United States, sick employees should follow your company's policy for obtaining medical care or contact a healthcare provider or overseas medical assistance company to assist them with finding an appropriate healthcare provider in that country. A U.S. consular officer can help locate healthcare services. However, U.S. embassies, consulates, and military facilities do not have the legal authority, capability, and resources to evacuate or give medicines, vaccines, or medical care to private U.S. citizens overseas.
- **Additional Measures in Response to Currently Occurring Sporadic Importations of the COVID-19:**
 - Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should notify their supervisor and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.
 - If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

Planning for a Possible COVID-19 Outbreak in the US

The severity of illness or how many people will fall ill from COVID-19 is unknown at this time. If there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S., employers should plan to be able to respond in a flexible way to varying levels of severity and be prepared to refine their business response plans as needed. For the general American public, such as workers in non-healthcare settings and where it is unlikely that work tasks create an increased risk of exposures to COVID-19, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low. The CDC and its partners will continue to monitor national and international data on the severity of illness caused by COVID-19, will disseminate the results of these ongoing surveillance assessments, and will make additional recommendations as needed.

Planning Considerations

All employers need to consider how best to decrease the spread of acute respiratory illness and lower the impact of COVID-19 in their workplace in the event of an outbreak in the US. They should identify and communicate their objectives, which may include one or more of the following: (a) reducing transmission among staff, (b) protecting people who are at higher risk for adverse health complications, (c) maintaining business operations, and (d) minimizing adverse effects on other entities in their supply chains. Some of the key considerations when making decisions on appropriate responses are:

- Disease severity (i.e., number of people who are sick, hospitalization and death rates) in the community where the business is located;
- Impact of disease on employees that are vulnerable and may be at higher risk for COVID-19 adverse health complications. Inform employees that some people may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.
- Prepare for possible increased numbers of employee absences due to illness in employees and their family members, dismissals of early childhood programs and K-12 schools due to high levels of absenteeism or illness:
 - Employers should plan to monitor and respond to absenteeism at the workplace. Implement plans to continue your essential business functions in case you experience higher than usual absenteeism.
 - Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.
 - Assess your essential functions and the reliance that others and the community have on your services or products. Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Employers with more than one business location are encouraged to provide local managers with the authority to take appropriate actions outlined in their business infectious disease outbreak response plan based on the condition in each locality.
- Coordination with state [↗](#) and local [↗](#) health officials is strongly encouraged for all businesses so that timely and accurate information can guide appropriate responses in each location where their operations reside. Since the intensity of an outbreak may differ according to geographic location, local health officials will be issuing guidance specific to their communities.

Important Considerations for Creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan

All employers should be ready to implement strategies to protect their workforce from COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations. During a COVID-19 outbreak, all sick employees should stay home and away from the workplace, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene should be encouraged, and routine cleaning of commonly touched surfaces should be performed regularly.

Employers should:

- Ensure the plan is flexible and involve your employees in developing and reviewing your plan.
- Conduct a focused discussion or exercise using your plan, to find out ahead of time whether the plan has gaps or problems that need to be corrected.
- Share your plan with employees and explain what human resources policies, workplace and leave flexibilities, and pay and benefits will be available to them.
- Share best practices with other businesses in your communities (especially those in your supply chain), chambers of commerce, and associations to improve community response efforts.

Recommendations for an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan:

- Identify possible work-related exposure and health risks to your employees. OSHA has more information on how to protect workers from potential exposures [☞](#) to COVID-19.
- Review human resources policies to make sure that policies and practices are consistent with public health recommendations and are consistent with existing state and federal workplace laws (for more information on employer responsibilities, visit the Department of Labor's [☞](#) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's [☞](#) websites).
- Explore whether you can establish policies and practices, such as flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), to increase the physical distance among employees and between employees and others if state and local health authorities recommend the use of social distancing strategies. For employees who are able to telework, supervisors should encourage employees to telework instead of coming into the workplace until symptoms are completely resolved. Ensure that you have the information technology and infrastructure needed to support multiple employees who may be able to work from home.
- Identify essential business functions, essential jobs or roles, and critical elements within your supply chains (e.g., raw materials, suppliers, subcontractor services/products, and logistics) required to maintain business operations. Plan for how your business will operate if there is increasing absenteeism or these supply chains are interrupted.
- Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's infectious disease outbreak response plan, altering business operations (e.g., possibly changing or closing operations in affected areas), and transferring business knowledge to key employees. Work closely with your local health officials to identify these triggers.
- Plan to minimize exposure between employees and also between employees and the public, if public health officials call for social distancing.
- Establish a process to communicate information to employees and business partners on your infectious disease outbreak response plans and latest COVID-19 information. Anticipate employee fear, anxiety, rumors, and misinformation, and plan communications accordingly.
- In some communities, early childhood programs and K-12 schools may be dismissed, particularly if COVID-19 worsens. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees, those who stay home to care for sick family members, and those who must stay home to watch their children if dismissed from

school. Businesses and other employers should prepare to institute flexible workplace and leave policies for these employees.

- Local conditions will influence the decisions that public health officials make regarding community-level strategies; employers should take the time now to learn about plans in place in each community where they have a business.
- If there is evidence of a COVID-19 outbreak in the US, consider canceling non-essential business travel to additional countries per travel guidance on the CDC website.
 - Travel restrictions may be enacted by other countries which may limit the ability of employees to return home if they become sick while on travel status.
 - Consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events.
- Engage state [↗](#) and local [↗](#) health departments to confirm channels of communication and methods for dissemination of local outbreak information.

Resources for more information:

CDC Guidance

- COVID-19 Website
- What You Need to Know About COVID-19 [📄](#)
- What to Do If You Are Sick With COVID-19 [📄](#)
- Interim US Guidance for Risk Assessment and Public Health Management of Persons with Potential Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Exposure in Travel-associated or Community Settings
- Health Alert Network
- Travelers' Health Website
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Small Business International Travel Resource Travel Planner [📄](#)
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 Recommendations for Ships

Other Federal Agencies and Partners

- OSHA Guidance: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/index.html [↗](#)

Page last reviewed: February 26, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Symptoms

For confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death. Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

CDC believes at this time that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS-CoV viruses.

The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) web page.

COVID 19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

SYMPTOMS* OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

Patients with COVID-19 have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms can include

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

*** Symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure. If you have been in China within the past 2 weeks and develop symptoms, call your doctor.**

www.cdc.gov/COVID19

19-088: Revised 1/20/20

- [South Korea](#)

Related Links

- [All COVID-19 Travel Health Notices](#)
- [COVID-19 Situation Summary](#)

Page last reviewed: February 27, 2020

Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How COVID-19 Spreads

Current understanding about how the virus that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is more to learn about how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Spread from contact with infected surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

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.

How easily does the virus spread?

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Affected Geographic Areas with Widespread or Sustained Community Transmission

Last updated February 26, 2020

- China
- Iran
- Italy
- Japan

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Prevention & Treatment

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.
 - CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

For information about handwashing, see CDC's [Handwashing website](#)

For information specific to healthcare, see CDC's [Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#)

These are everyday habits that can help prevent the spread of several viruses. CDC does have specific guidance for [travelers](#).

Treatment

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.

People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

See [Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals](#) for information on persons under investigation.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What to Do If You Are Sick With Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)


If you develop a fever¹ and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or shortness of breath, within 14 days after travel from China, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your recent travel or close contact. If you have had close contact² with someone showing these symptoms who has recently traveled from this area, you should call ahead to a healthcare professional and mention your close contact and their recent travel. Your healthcare professional will work with your state's public health department and CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19.



Information for Travelers from
China Arriving in the United
States



Information for household
members, intimate partners,
and caregivers of a person with
COVID-19

Printer friendly version 

Steps to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you are sick with COVID-19, avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask. See COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share 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.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces everyday

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

Footnote

¹Fever may be subjective or confirmed

²Close contact is defined as—

1. a) being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case for a prolonged period of time; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case

– or –

1. b) having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g., being coughed on)

If such contact occurs while not wearing recommended personal protective equipment or PPE (e.g., gowns, gloves, NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirator, eye protection), criteria for PUI consideration are met”

See CDC’s updated Interim Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Persons Under Investigation for 2019 Novel Coronavirus.

Data to inform the definition of close contact are limited. Considerations when assessing close contact include the duration of exposure (e.g., longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk) and the clinical symptoms of the person with COVID-19 (e.g., coughing likely increases exposure risk as does exposure to a severely ill patient). Special consideration should be given to those exposed in health care settings.