m1 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

About Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

UPDATED 3/27/20

COVID-19 Disease

- COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus that has not been found in people before.
- Because this is a new virus, there are still things we do not know, such as how severe the illness can be, how well it is transmitted between people, and other features of the virus. More information will be provided when it is available.

Severity

- Many cases have mild or moderate illness and do not require a clinic visit and most do not require hospitalization.
- Those at highest risk for severe illness include older people or those that have certain underlying health conditions. These include such high risk conditions as a blood disorder, chronic kidney disease, chronic liver disease, compromised immune system, late term or recent pregnancy, endocrine disorders, metabolic disorders, heart disease, lung disease, neurological conditions. Check with your health care provider to see if you are considered high risk.

Symptoms of COVID-19

- According to CDC, patients with confirmed COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath
- Some patients have had other symptoms including muscle aches, headache, sore throat, or diarrhea.
- Symptoms usually appear about five days after a person is exposed to COVID-19, but can appear anywhere between 2-14 days after exposure.

How it spreads

- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
    - It spreads between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
    - These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- It is also 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. Wash your hands and clean frequently touched surfaces often.
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms (when they are asymptomatic); there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
    - The virus spreads most easily when a person has symptoms and is coughing or sneezing.

Testing for COVID-19

- People who do not have symptoms should not be tested for COVID-19. Due to national shortages of lab testing supplies, we do not have an unlimited capacity for testing.
- We are currently prioritizing most testing for people who are hospitalized, health care workers, and people living or working in congregate living settings, such as nursing homes and others.

Testing locations

- Most clinics and hospitals across the state have the ability to collect samples (specimens) for lab testing.
- It is best to call your health care provider before going to the clinic or hospital to be tested.
- MDH does not directly collect samples for testing; we receive the samples from providers and do the testing in our public health laboratory.
- There are some commercial reference laboratories that can test. Your health care provider may conduct testing through these laboratories. If you are tested for COVID-19, the clinic that did your testing will get the results to you.

Contact with someone who has COVID-19

If you were a close contact of someone sick with COVID-19 there are different recommendations depending on whether or not your close contact was tested.

Lab confirmed

- If you or someone in your household is determined to be a close contact of a lab confirmed case of COVID-19, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will speak with you directly about staying home for 14 days after exposure.

Not lab confirmed

- If you were exposed to a close contact (e.g., household or intimate contact) who was diagnosed with COVID-19, but not laboratory confirmed, it is still important that you monitor your health for 14 days after that exposure.
- Please stay at home as much as possible.
- Some people may be required to go to work. Before you go to work, please work with your supervisor or occupational health staff to arrange ways for you to check your symptoms in the morning before you go to work.

- If you do go to work, monitor for symptoms, wash your hands, and wipe down surfaces.
- Health care workers should check with their occupational health. See if you can be reassigned to non-direct patient care duties. If there is a shortage of health care workers and you must work, wear a surgical mask and practice meticulous hand hygiene. In addition, do not see patients who are at high risk for severe disease if infected.

Contact with someone who was exposed

- If you are exposed to someone who was exposed, but has no symptoms, the rest of the household can still go about normal activities.
- MDH does not consider contacts of contacts to be at increased risk for COVID-19.

How long to stay home if sick

- If you have symptoms of a respiratory disease (these include fever, coughing, muscle aches, sore throat, and headache), you should stay home for at least 7 days, and for 3 days with no fever and improvement of respiratory symptoms—whichever is longer. (Your fever should be gone for 3 days without using fever-reducing medicine.)
- For example, if you have a fever and coughing for 4 days, you need to stay home 3 more days with no fever for a total of 7 days. Or, if you have a fever and coughing for 5 days, you need to stay home 3 more days with no fever for a total of 8 days.

Going to the doctor

- If you have symptoms and can manage those symptoms at home, you don't have to seek health care or be tested for COVID-19. Just stay home while you are sick. This prevents you from accidentally spreading COVID-19 to others who may be at higher risk for serious complications.

- If you are older or have underlying medical conditions, it may be helpful to let your health care provider know you are sick. They may have some specific advice for you.
- Some people with COVID-19 have worsened during the second week of illness. Seek medical care right away if your illness is worsening (for example, if you have difficulty breathing). Before going to the doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them your symptoms. They will tell you what to do.

CDC's Coronavirus Self-Checker found at Symptoms & Testing (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/index.html) can help you make decisions about seeking appropriate medical care. This tool is not intended for the diagnosis or treatment of disease or other conditions, including COVID-19.

Treatment

- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19. Get rest and stay hydrated.
- If your symptoms worsen to the point that you need to see a doctor, call ahead before going in.

More information

Information changes quickly, so please check these websites for the latest information.

MDH website (www.health.state.mn.us)

CDC website (www.cdc.gov)

COVID-19 Hotlines:

- Health questions: 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. 651-201-3920
- Schools and child care questions: 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Minnesota Department of Health
Infectious Disease Epidemiology, Prevent and Control Division
625 Robert St. N.
PO Box 64975
St. Paul, MN 55164-0975
www.health.state.mn.us

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 651-201-5414.