

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

FAQs

TOP LINE

APRIL 2020

The health and safety of our employees and customers is of the utmost importance to us as the world responds to the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. We are in the midst of an unprecedented global event that has dramatically changed our day-to-day lives and will continue to do so for the immediate future. At the same time, we are taking precautions to ensure that our staff are at home and safe with their families, while also being able to support the needs of our customers.

As part of our response efforts, we have partnered with Dr. David Hamer, a professor at the Boston University Schools of Public Health and Medicine and a board-certified specialist in infectious diseases with more than 30 years of experience, to share some important Frequently Asked Questions, information and safety tips that will be useful in combating COVID-19 in these stressful times.

What steps should be taken to prevent contracting or spreading COVID-19?

- COVID-19 (caused by SARS-CoV-2) is spread by respiratory droplets (through coughing and sneezing) and from person-to-person contact, which is why social distancing and limiting gatherings of people are highly encouraged. Keeping a distance of at least 6 feet between people is recommended, as well as avoiding shaking hands, hugs and other forms of close contact.
- It is important to wash hands for 20-30 seconds with water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizer after being in public places or coming into contact of frequently touched places, like railings or doorknobs.
- Only hand sanitizers that have at least 60% alcohol are effective in killing SARS-CoV-2.
- For additional information on preventing the spread of COVID-19, please visit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html.

Who is at risk for contracting COVID-19?

- There is still much to be learned about COVID-19 and whom it will affect, but it is known that

adults 65 and older, as well as persons with health issues such as diabetes, sickle cell anemia, cardiac and pulmonary disease, chronic kidney disease, cancer and others, are at higher risk of more severe disease and death if they contract the virus.

- Pregnant women should take precautions against COVID-19, although preliminary evidence does not suggest a greatly increased risk relative to non-pregnant women.
- Although some children have contracted COVID-19, overall children do not appear to be at high risk for contracting the virus or from having severe disease.

Is there a vaccine or a cure for COVID-19?

- At this time, there is no vaccine for COVID-19, and the best course of action is to practice social distancing in order to avoid contact with any persons who may have it.
- There are a number of different drugs that are being tested for treatment and prevention of COVID-19, but there are none that have yet shown conclusive evidence of effectiveness.

What started COVID-19?

- It is still not determined how this pandemic started, but it is suspected that SARS-CoV-2 was spread from animals to humans (potentially from bats with an intermediate animal host and then spread to humans). This is rare since coronaviruses often only infect humans or animals, but have been known to spread between both.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- COVID-19 has several symptoms, ranging from mild to severe.
- Mild symptoms may feel like cold symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat and cough. There is increasing evidence that some patients will experience loss of taste and loss of smell due to COVID-19.
- Severe symptoms may include fever, fatigue, dry cough and shortness of breath.

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How long does it take for symptoms of COVID-19 to show?

- If COVID-19 is contracted, typically symptoms will begin to show within four to six days, but it may take as long as 14 days.
- It is even possible for the virus to begin passing before a person shows signs of the virus.

Should a doctor be seen if these symptoms are experienced?

- The need to see a doctor may depend on the severity of the symptoms. If the symptoms are mild, recovery in the safety of the home is within 10-14 days, though it is recommended to reach out and maintain contact with a doctor.
- If the symptoms are severe, yes, it is recommended that a doctor or a medical professional is contacted to determine where to seek care.
- If there has been a COVID-19 contact or this infection is suspected, it is best to call a doctor or the city or state Department of Health to find out where testing can be done.

What is the timeframe before returning to work or normal activities if sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

- If a person is sick with COVID-19 or is suspected to have COVID-19, they should only leave their home to return to work and regular activities if 72 hours or more have passed since any fever has dissipated without the use of medication, there has been an improvement in the person's respiratory functions, and at least seven days have passed since the person first started showing symptoms.
- If a person still shows symptoms that person should continue home isolation.
- If a person has a confirmed case of COVID-19, but has not shown symptoms of the virus, they may leave their home when at least seven days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and also have no signs of sickness.

How can the spread of COVID-19 be prevented?

- The best action is to stay home and avoid public gatherings. Social distancing is key to slowing and stopping the spread of COVID-19. Any time someone goes out to a public place, there is a risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.
- Other recommendations include:
 - Regularly wash hands for 20-30 seconds with water and soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
 - Sneezing and coughing into a tissue;
 - Properly disposing of the tissue;
 - Clean all surface areas that have regular contact from people;
 - Avoid public transportation; and
 - Wear a face mask if sick.

What to do if feeling sick?

- If experienced symptoms align with those of COVID-19 (runny nose, sore throat, muscle aches, fever, shortness of breath and coughing), stay home to avoid any risk of spreading the virus should it be COVID-19.
- If difficulty of breathing develops, contact a physician and consider seeking medical care.
- Contacting a physician is also recommended in order to discuss the best next steps depending on the severity of symptoms.

Is going outside okay?

- Yes, COVID-19 has not been found to be airborne, which makes it safe to be outside.
- Going outside is also recommended in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle, which also includes getting plenty of sleep, eating well, exercise and relaxing.
- If teleworking from home, it is important to stay active and get outside. Going for a few 10-minute walks throughout the day is highly encouraged as long as a distance of at least 6 feet is maintained from people encountered while out.

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How long will the COVID-19 pandemic last?

- There is no specific timetable on how long COVID-19 will impact the U.S., as well as other countries. Data has shown that if people follow safety recommendations – social distancing and washing of hands – the spread of COVID-19 will be dramatically slowed.
- The next four to six weeks will be critical in determining COVID-19's scope in the U.S.

With warmer weather coming, will that stop the spread of COVID-19?

- It has yet to be determined if warmer temperatures will slow or stop the spread of COVID-19. Regardless of temperatures, it is recommended that people continue to practice social distancing and hand cleaning.

Do nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) worsen the course of COVID-19?

- The CDC is currently not aware of any scientific evidence establishing a link between NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen) and the worsening of COVID-19.
- As a precaution, it is best to use Tylenol as a safety measure if COVID-19 is suspected or proven until more data is available.
- Patients who rely on NSAIDs to treat chronic conditions and have additional questions should speak to a healthcare provider for individualized management.