



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Updated March 11, 2020



The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) continue to closely monitor an outbreak of respiratory illnesses caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

Healthcare Professionals

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Updates

New Guidance: **COVID-19 Testing No Longer Requires Prior Approval from MSDH**

March 11, 2020: Prior approval from MSDH for submission of samples to the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory is no longer required. See the latest testing priorities in this document.

[View guidance »](#)

New Healthcare Professionals Infection Control Guidance

March 10, 2020: This updated guidance from the CDC provides updated PPE recommendations for the care of patients with known or suspected COVID-19.

[Details »](#)

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday): 877-978-6453

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that causes flu-like illness ranging from mild to severe, with symptoms of fever, coughing, fatigue and difficulty breathing. The CDC and MSDH are working to detect, contain and limit the spread of cases in the U.S. and Mississippi should they occur. MSDH is actively preparing doctors and hospitals on how to respond safely and effectively to COVID-19 in Mississippi.

Like the flu, COVID-19 it is thought to be spread person-to-person by close contact (within 6 feet) and by coughing or sneezing. Other possible routes of transmission, such as touching surfaces contaminated by the virus, are also being investigated.

- ▶ [Questions and Answers for Mississippians About COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [Questions and Answers about Coronavirus COVID-19](#) CDC
- ▶ [Full COVID-19 information from the CDC](#)

COVID-19 in Mississippi and the U.S.

Cases of COVID-19 continue to be identified in U.S. states, and in some areas, person-to-person contact has been identified. This is a rapidly changing situation that is continually being monitored by the CDC and MSDH as more cases in the U.S. are expected.

The risk of infection to the general public in Mississippi remains low.

Mississippi confirmed cases: 1

Individuals tested by the MSDH Public Health Laboratory: 32 as of March 11, 2020, 12:20 p.m.

More Information on U.S. Cases

- ▶ [Coronavirus COVID-19 cases in the United States](#) CDC

COVID-19 Testing

Last week, the MSDH Public Health Laboratory began testing samples submitted by Mississippi physicians and healthcare providers in cases where COVID-19 is a possibility. Anyone with flu-like symptoms, especially those who are older or in poor health, should see a healthcare provider as a matter of general good health. Healthcare providers can assess individual cases which may need specific testing for COVID-19.

Prevention and Preparedness

For Individuals

Preventive measures against COVID-19 are the same as those for other respiratory viruses like the flu. To help prevent getting and spreading disease:

- Stay home if you are sick, and avoid close contact with anyone who is ill.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. When possible, cough, sneeze or blow your nose into a tissue, and throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose, and using the bathroom. Effective handwashing takes about 20 seconds, and includes cleaning under fingernails, between fingers, and washing the back of hands as well as the front. [More proper handwashing tips '](#)

- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- Stay in good overall health by eating right and staying active. If you are living with diabetes, heart disease or other condition, keep in touch with your doctor and stay current with your treatment.
- During or before flu season, get a flu shot. Flu vaccination can prevent the flu or make it less severe, and decrease your chance of hospitalization and death. It also keeps you healthier and better able to fight off infections.

► [More about preventing respiratory virus illnesses](#)

For People at High Risk

People at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are older adults and those with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease. These people should take simple precautions at all times to limit their exposure to others who may be ill:

- Keep more space between you and others as you go through the day.
- Avoid crowds. When you do go out in public, keep away from others who are sick and limit close contact.
- Wash your hands often, especially after being in public places.

If COVID-19 begins to spread locally, you should stay home as much as possible. Having a supply of important medications and basic supplies can help.

► [Full recommendations from the CDC for people at high risk](#)

Care facilities in north Mississippi: The State Health Officer has issued special COVID-19 precautions for nursing homes and similar care facilities in De Soto, Marshall, Tate and Tunica counties.

► [Read the full precautions](#)

In the Community

Schools, businesses, events and other places that people gather can take steps to prevent or limit the spread of viral illness.

The CDC offers preparation advice for:

- [Households](#)
- [Schools and daycares](#)
- [Healthcare facilities](#)
- [The workplace, colleges, gatherings and more](#)

The Mississippi Department of Education has issued guidelines for Mississippi schools concerning COVID-19.

► [Department of Education COVID-19 Guidelines](#) MDE

For Healthcare Professionals

- [Guidance for Mississippi Healthcare Providers: Identify, Isolate and Call MSDH](#)
- [Flowchart: Identifying and reporting COVID-19 cases to MSDH](#)
- [Mississippi Specimen Collection and Shipping Guidance](#)
- [Complete guidances and information for healthcare professionals](#)

What MSDH Is Doing

The Mississippi State Department of Health is aggressively responding to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation. With other state agencies, it has activated emergency operations in order to prepare for possible person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 in Mississippi.

Other steps that MSDH is taking include:

- Surveillance: Increasing surveillance (monitoring) activities to identify cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible and to limit person-to-person transmission.
- Testing: Making COVID-19 testing available for healthcare providers through the MSDH Public Health Laboratory.
- Planning: Working directly with hospitals and healthcare providers across the state to plan for possible cases of COVID-19, preparing them to identify and safely treat cases.
- Readiness: Assessing statewide hospital capacities, ensuring the capacity of the MSDH Public Health Laboratory for COVID-19 testing, and informing all Mississippi healthcare providers about procedures for identifying and testing for coronavirus cases.
- Information: Providing guidance to business, education and other entities on how to respond to the possible spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Coronavirus Hotline

The Mississippi State Department of Health is now operating a hotline for convenient answers to questions about COVID-19 by phone.

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday): 877-978-6453

Information for Travelers

Travelers Overseas: The CDC has issued Travel Warnings recommending the postponement or avoidance to countries where COVID-19 is being actively transmitted. The U.S. Department of State has also issued a Level 4: Do Not Travel advisory to China.

- ▶ [CDC Guidance for Travelers](#)
- ▶ [State Department Travel Advisories](#)

Travelers returning to the U.S.: Steps to protect health are being taken nationally for travelers returning from parts of the world affected by COVID-19, including health screenings on entry into the U.S..

- ▶ [Full information for returning travelers](#) CDC

Resources

- ▶ [Handouts: Basic disease prevention and handwashing flyers for printing](#)

Our free newsletter includes monthly disease updates:



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