Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is working closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in monitoring the new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) that is causing an outbreak of respiratory illness worldwide. You can find the current Texas case count on our News Updates page.

Browse this site for what to do if you're sick, testing information, symptoms, and prevention tips to help DSHS share facts, not fear.

Hospitals, healthcare professionals, local public health, community leaders, and others can find resources throughout this website to help them in their response to COVID-19.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available. Check back often for the latest details and what Texans need to know about COVID-19. See also the CDC website for the latest developments on COVID-19:

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (CDC)

INFORMATION FOR:

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Hospitals & Healthcare Professionals
Laboratories
Public Health
First Responders
Communities & Other Specific Groups
News Media

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What to Do If You Are Sick

Symptoms of COVID-19 may show up 2-14 days after exposure. The steps you should take if you think you are sick with COVID-19 depend on whether you have a higher risk of developing severe illness.

High-Risk Individuals:

Older adults (65 years and older)

Heart Disease

Diabetes

High Blood Pressure

Cancer

Weakened Immune Systems

- People 65 years or older, and/or people with medical issues, like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, or a weakened immune system, are at a higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- If you are a high-risk individual and you develop fever or symptoms, call your doctor.
- If you are not sick enough to be hospitalized, you can recover at home. Follow your doctor's instructions and refer to CDC recommendations for how to take care of yourself at home.

General Population:

- If you are in generally good health and have mild symptoms, stay home and take care of yourself like you would for a cold or the flu.
- If symptoms worsen, call your doctor.

For more information on how to take care of yourself at home if you are sick, see the CDC website:

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK (CDC)

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COVID-19 Testing

Your doctor will help make the decision whether you should get tested for COVID-19.

Texas public health labs now have the capacity to test at least 273 people per day, with more private labs coming online every day. Testing will continue to expand through both public and private labs. Private testing will far exceed what is available through the public health system.

Public health testing focuses on people who have symptoms and meet testing criteria below. Following the testing criteria helps us understand how the virus is spreading and what public health actions will be helpful.

Private testing is available with a doctor's order.

- Public Health Testing (Free)
  - You will need to call your local health department and meet certain testing criteria before you can get tested.
  - Testing criteria includes having fever, cough, shortness of breath PLUS:
    - have had close contact with a confirmed case,
    - have traveled to a location with ongoing transmission of COVID-19,
    - have risk factors for getting very sick from COVID-19, or
    - are hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms even if you do not have any risk factors.
- Private Lab Testing (Cost depends on the lab)

Can someone with no health insurance get tested for COVID-19?

Yes, people with no health insurance have the option of getting tested at a public health lab or at a private lab.

If you need a healthcare provider, dial 211 – they will direct you to low- or no-cost providers in your area. Providers for uninsured people may also contact public health to facilitate if testing is appropriate.

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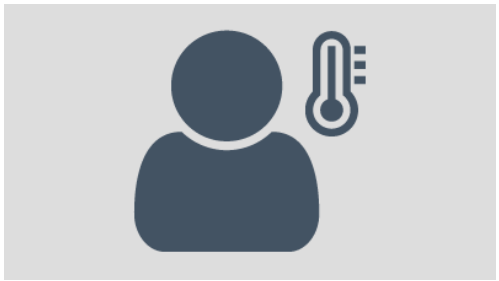
Symptoms of COVID-19

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



Fever

Cough

Learn more about COVID-19 symptoms on the CDC website.

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Shortness of Breath

Prevention of COVID-19

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take steps to avoid exposure to this virus, which are similar to the steps you take to avoid the flu.

Wash hands with soap and water.

Use hand sanitizer as backup.

Cover coughs and sneezes.

Avoid touching face.

Disinfect often touched surfaces.

Avoid close contact.

DSHS recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of any respiratory virus, including COVID-19:

- Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
- If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

DSHS also recommends that you start practicing social distancing. Social distancing involves staying away from other people to avoid catching or spreading illness. It's a fancy term for avoiding crowds and minimizing physical contact. This could mean avoiding concerts or weddings, skipping the handshake, and/or staying at least six feet away from others.

See the CDC website for more information on what you can do at home to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

GET YOUR HOUSEHOLD READY FOR COVID-19 (CDC)

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How COVID-19 Spreads

Current understanding about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads is largely based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

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).
- Via 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.

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 with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Download the Stop the Spread of Germs flyer.

Read the latest information from the CDC on how COVID-19 is spread

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Learn More

To learn key facts and help stop the spread of rumors, see the Share Facts, Not Fear page on the CDC's COVID-19 website.

For more in-depth information on COVID-19, see the CDC's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

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Contact Us

If you have any questions or would like more information about the content on this page, contact by email or by phone:

Email: coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov

For questions about COVID-19, dial 2-1-1, then choose Option 6.
Hours: 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., 7 days per week

For local assistance, see the listing of **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID–19) Local Health Entities**.

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This page is being updated as new information becomes available.

Last updated March 14, 2020