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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

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COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

TEXAS CASE COUNTS ▢

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.

On March 19, 2020, Dr. John Hellerstedt, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, declared a public health disaster in Texas, because COVID-19 "has created an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people, and creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease's method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas."

Read the full text of the declaration

See also the CDC website for the latest developments on COVID-19:

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (CDC) ▢

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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.
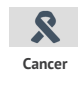
High-Risk Individuals:

Older adults (65 years and older)

Heart Disease

High Blood Pressure

Cancer

Weakened Immune Systems

Diabetes

- 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.

If you need help finding a doctor or accessing medical care, call 2-1-1 and they can direct you to low- or no-cost providers in your area.

See the CDC website for more information on how to take care of yourself and others at home if sick:

| WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE SICK (CDC) ❑ | CARING FOR YOURSELF AT HOME (CDC) ❑ | CARING FOR SOMEONE AT HOME (CDC) ❑ | Information on disinfecting your home if someone is sick can also be found on the CDC website: |

| DISINFECTING YOUR HOME (CDC) ❑ |

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COVID-19 Testing

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

If you do not have health insurance, you can still get tested for COVID-19 if your doctor or healthcare provider recommends it.

For information about testing, you just need to call your doctor and/or access care the way you usually do. If you need help finding a doctor or accessing medical care, call 2-1-1 and they can direct you to low- or no-cost providers in your area.

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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

Shortness of Breath

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

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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) ❑

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

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)

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

If you experience difficulty when dialing 2-1-1, please email coronavirus@dshs.texas.gov.

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

This page is being updated as new information becomes available.

Last updated March 20, 2020

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