



**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)  
*Overview of COVID-19***

**What is COVID-19?** Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus. The disease causes respiratory illness (like the flu) with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in people and many different species of animals, including camels, cattle, cats, and bats. Rarely, animal Coronaviruses can infect people and then spread between people such as with MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV, and now with this new virus (named SARS-CoV-2). [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recognizes and is responding to this outbreak of respiratory disease caused by this new Coronavirus that was first detected in China and has now been detected in more than 100 locations internationally, including in the United States. The virus has been named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “Coronavirus disease 2019” (abbreviated “COVID-19”).

**If I’m not feeling well, what should I do?**

If you are sick, please stay home. You should stay home and avoid contact with other people for at least 24 hours after your fever has subsided without the help of fever reducers.

To reduce exposure, if you have traveled to a high-risk area, have had contact with someone with either suspected or confirmed COVID-19, or feel you are exhibiting mild symptoms you think may be associated with COVID-19 such as mild respiratory illness, fever or cough, please call first at [123-456-7890]. Our healthcare providers will evaluate your symptoms and explain your best course of action.

**What is the source of Coronavirus and how does it spread?**

Coronavirus disease spreads primarily through contact with an infected person when they cough or sneeze. It also spreads when a person touches a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth.

COVID-19 is a new disease and we are still learning how it spreads, the severity of illness it causes and to what extent it may spread in the U.S.

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).
- Through 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.

It may be 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, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

### **What are symptoms of Coronavirus?**

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Call your doctor if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or have recently traveled from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs\* include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

Call 911 if you have a medical emergency: If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

### **How can I best protect myself and my family from Coronavirus?**

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

Take steps to protect yourself by:

- Washing your hands often
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Staying home if you are sick
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Wearing a facemask if you are sick
- Cleaning and disinfecting your home and work area frequently

### **Is hand sanitizer just as effective as soap and water?**

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

### **If a virus is airborne, why is handwashing the best defense?**

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. Handwashing with soap removes germs from hands. This helps prevent infections because:

- People frequently touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without even realizing it. Germs can get into the body through the eyes, nose, and mouth and make us sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can get into foods and drinks while people prepare or consume them. Germs can multiply in some types of foods or drinks, under certain conditions, and make people sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects like handrails, tabletops, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.
- Removing germs through handwashing therefore helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

### **Should I wear a facemask to protect myself?**

The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to prevent themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 or other respiratory diseases to help prevent the spread of disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in a close setting (at home or in a health care facility).

### **Who is most at risk of transmitting COVID-19?**

Disease can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity. Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19:

- People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19
- People who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at increased risk of exposure
- Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people

### **Who are the people considered to be high risk groups?**

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

The CDC has information for other special populations, who at this time are not considered high risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness but are at increased risk of severe illness from other infectious disease. These include pregnant women and children.

### **What is the definition of older adults? What age?**

In general terms, older adults are age 65 and over.

### **How is Coronavirus diagnosed?**

Patients will be evaluated by a medical professional and instructed on the level of care needed and if diagnostic testing is needed. For initial diagnostic testing, the CDC recommends collecting and testing upper respiratory tract specimens through nasal and oral swabs.

### **How is Coronavirus treated?**

Not all patients with COVID-19 will require medical supportive care. There are currently no antiviral drugs licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to treat COVID-19.

Current medical treatment is supportive of the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and depends on the level of illness. Most common treatment is fluids, fever-reducing medications such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen and/or a ventilator if respiratory depression occurs.

### **Can people who recover from COVID-19 be infected again?**

The human immune response to COVID-19 is not yet understood.

## COVID-19 vs. Flu

### **How is COVID-19 different than the common flu?**

Symptoms are very similar, but it appears that the speed of transmission of the virus is higher in influenza. However, the reproductive number (the number of individuals infected from a patient with a particular illness) is higher in COVID-19.

### **Why is COVID-19 getting more attention than the seasonal flu?**

In short, it is due to the unknown. In addition, it is a highly contagious virus that is occurring during a heavy flu season. The combination of the two illnesses puts a great deal of stress on the health system and could overwhelm our health systems and resources if we cannot slow the progress.

### **Will cases of COVID-19 taper off in spring, like cold and flu season does?**

The hope is it will act like a seasonal flu and taper off once warm weather arrives and people stop congregating in enclosed areas, but that is very optimistic.

## Community/Travel

### **What is social distancing?**

Social distancing is a public health safety intervention used to reduce the likelihood of transmitting communicable disease. Social distancing involves minimizing exposure to infected individuals by avoiding large public gathering venues, adhering to recommended spacing requirements and following proper personal hygiene practices.

### **Should I cancel future travel plans?**

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and the CDC provides updated information as it becomes available. Please check here for the most recent information on COVID-19 and travel: <https://www.cdc.gov/Coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

### **How long can the virus stay on surfaces?**

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other Coronaviruses. Studies suggest that Coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

If you think a surface may be infected, clean it with simple disinfectant to kill the virus and protect yourself and others. Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wash them with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose.

### **Is it safe to receive a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported?**

Yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of

catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, traveled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.

### **Are my pets safe?**

While this virus seems to have emerged from an animal source, it is now spreading from person-to-person. There is no reason to think that any animals, including pets in the United States, might be a source of infection with this new Coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. At this time, there is no evidence that companion animals including pets can spread COVID-19. However, since animals can spread other diseases to people, it's always a good idea to wash your hands after being around animals. For more information on the many benefits of pet ownership, as well as staying safe and healthy around animals including pets, livestock, and wildlife, visit CDC's [Healthy Pets, Healthy People website](#).

### **Is the United States working on a COVID-19 vaccine?**

CDC has grown the COVID-19 virus in cell culture, which is necessary for further studies, including antiviral research.

### Valor Health FAQ

#### **Should I be tested for COVID-19?**

If you have symptoms such as fever (100.4 or greater), new or worsening cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing AND had known exposure to a confirmed COVID-19 patient OR travel to a highly infected areas OR is a healthcare worker OR is a resident of a long-term care facility, these are indications you may need to be screened and tested.

For questions, there is a 24/7 triage nurse to assist with screening over the phone at 208-365-3561. In addition, a *Respiratory Illness* Triage Tent has been established to screen and test for COVID-19 (if applicable) and is located in the parking lot of Valor Health Urgent Care/ Emmett Medical Center, 1102 E Locust Street.

#### **What criteria warrants testing?**

Availability of lab testing is very limited across our region. All healthcare providers are experiencing similar issues with lab testing availability. Testing criteria is based on the CDC guidelines and not all patients who present with symptoms will get tested. Key risk factors for testing are listed above. Ninety percent of positive patients have a high fever.

#### **How long does it take to get test results back?**

Tests are sent to the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories and commercial laboratories throughout the state. Most results are complete in 48 hours, but in some cases, it is taking longer to receive results.

#### **Valor Health Respiratory Triage Tent: How do I seek care if the tent is closed?**

Currently the screening tent is open Monday-Thursday 8am-7pm and Fridays 8am-5pm. It will be closed during the weekends at this time. If you need assistance after hours, please call (208)365-3561. Call 911 or go to emergency department if you need emergency care. For example:

- You have severe trouble breathing.
- You have severe dehydration. Symptoms of dehydration include:
  - Dry eyes and a dry mouth.
  - Passing only a little urine.
  - Feeling thirstier than usual.
  - You are extremely confused or not thinking clearly.
  - You pass out (lose consciousness).

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### **What do I do if I don't meet testing criteria?**

There are many reasons you may not feel well e.g. influenza, strep throat, etc. If symptoms are not progressing or have risk factors indicating testing is recommended, then testing may not occur. Most viruses (influenza and coronavirus and others) do not have a treatment i.e. antibiotics do not work for viruses only bacteria like strep. If symptoms are not progressing and you are stable, the best care is to avoid spreading the virus to others by staying home, cover mouth with tissue, use disinfectant, cover cough with mask around others, get plenty of rest and drink fluids. Self-isolate until your symptoms have subsided for 72 hours, as per CDC guidelines. If symptoms do get worse, call your doctor's office or visit screening tent.

### **Will I have to pay to be tested for coronavirus?**

Valor Health will charge \$62.00 for COVID-19 tests. For those who are insured, please verify plan coverage and member cost share information with your health insurance company. We will continuously provide updates on our site as more developments and information are released from government agencies. We appreciate your patience during this national emergency.

### **Does Valor Health Hospital have ventilators?**

Valor Health does not have an intensive care unit (ICU), staffed by intensive care doctors and nurses and equipped with ventilators. Valor is a critical access hospital that works with regional health systems to ensure our patients receive appropriate care, which may include facilitating transfer to a facility with specialized equipment and staff required to manage a ventilated patient. We regularly manage patients and their airways while under anesthesia or in emergency situations, which is similar, but not the same as the care provided in an ICU setting.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, March 2020  
(Q&A on Coronaviruses (COVID-19), 2020)*

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

