



CAPITAL AREA HUMAN SERVICES

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

This list of frequently asked questions was prepared by the Louisiana Department of Health and is periodically updated. It contains useful information on a variety of topics related to the coronavirus.

If you or a loved one is dealing with a behavioral health problem or developmental disability and live in East Baton Rouge or the surrounding parishes, please remember that you can call Capital Area Human Services for assistance.

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FEDERAL RELIEF FUNDS

How can I get more information about the federal economic relief package that was just passed?

Information has not yet been provided to state officials. They are trying to learn more about the package, what it means for Louisiana residents, and when and how the funds will be made available. Information will be provided as soon as it is known.

TESTING

Where can I go to get tested?

Testing sites are being set up at the local level. People wishing to be tested should seek a medical referral which would require confirmed baseline symptoms for testing at sites. These symptoms typically include fever and one respiratory symptom such as coughing or shortness of breath.

LDH is publishing a daily list of testing sites at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click Guidance and Resources and see Community Testing Sites (updated Twice Daily.)

Each testing facility has their own criteria for testing. Many sites require a medical provider submit a written referral to the testing site. Fax and/or phone numbers can be accessed via most testing sites' websites.

It is important that you contact the test site location or your healthcare provider for instructions before traveling to the test site.

All testing is being done by clinical providers, clinics and in hospitals. If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should contact your primary care physician for guidance.

I have disability and can't leave my home. How do I get tested?

The Department of Health has an online link to testing sites at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click on the testing site tab to find a nearby location.

If you have Medicaid, your managed care organization can arrange transportation to a test site. If you do not have Medicaid, check with your primary care provider for an order for a home health agency to come out and take the swab for testing.

I have read that people are having trouble getting their test results. Is there anything I can do to make sure that I know how to get my results?

Yes. When getting tested, be sure to ask someone at the test site to tell you when to expect your results, and where to call – be sure to get a phone number – if you haven't received your results within the timeframe you were given.



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The federal government has announced that all testing is free. Does this include the uninsured?

In Louisiana, no commercial insurance company can charge a patient an out of pocket fee for COVID testing. Medicaid and Medicare cover all of the costs of COVID testing. The federal government has made provisions for uninsured patients to receive free COVID testing; however, you should contact the testing site before you arrive to ensure they do not require a physician order for testing or that you are an existing patient of that healthcare facility's provider network. If you are uninsured and are unable to access COVID testing due to a lack of insurance, please contact 211 for a list of federally qualified community health centers near you.

Will the recently announced quick test for COVID-19 be available in Louisiana?

The 15-minute test instrument is a faster test for detecting the virus. It is being manufactured now, but the demand will likely far outpace the supply. The State and provider laboratories will be working to assess this and other new testing methods and will obtain faster technology as they are able. Check with your healthcare provider and/or the testing site that you visit.

How long before I get the results of my test?

The medical provider who ordered your test will receive your results directly from the laboratory that processed it. If you have not received your results within the timeframe the testing site told you to expect, usually between 3 and 7 days, you should contact the provider who ordered your test. If you do not have the contact information of the provider or cannot reach him or her, contact the site where you took the test for assistance.

How can I get my results if I was tested at the Mahalia Jackson, UNO Lakefront and the Alario Center in New Orleans?

If you have not received your results in five days, please call 3-1-1 for test results. Your call needs to be placed in the geographic area of New Orleans to reach the city's 3-1-1 center.

My tests were done by a Quest Diagnostics lab. What's the process getting my results from Quest?

Laboratory results for a Quest Diagnostics lab will be sent to you through the secure MyQuest online portal or app. Sign up at [MyQuestDiagnostics.com](https://www.MyQuestDiagnostics.com) or download the app on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

If you were tested at the Alario Center in Westwego, you can use the Quest Diagnostics portal for your results.

My tests were done by LabCorp. What's the process of getting my results?

Results for tests conducted by LabCorp can be accessed through their online portal at www.labcorp.com/results or their mobile app. Download the LabCorp Mobile App on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

LabCorp processed the tests conducted at UNO and at Armstrong Park.

Should I be tested for the virus?



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Only people who are ill with a fever and respiratory symptoms (cough) should be tested. This is because the test only tells you if you are currently infectious with the virus (not if you've had it or are going to get it). The CDC recently announced new guidance that allows anyone with symptoms to be tested for COVID-19 as long as their doctor approves. Unfortunately, there is more demand for testing than there are available tests, so in some locations the tests may be reserved for those who are seriously ill.

Your healthcare provider is making the best decisions possible at this time, balancing the demand for testing with the availability of tests. This means that not everyone can get a test as soon as they want it. Not getting a test is fine if you only have mild symptoms.

If you have mild symptoms and are worried that you might have COVID-19, call your doctor or local health department instead of going to a clinic or doctor's office without an appointment, to ensure you aren't potentially exposing others to the virus.

If you have severe breathing problems, seek medical attention or call 911 immediately and let the person you speak with know that you have respiratory problems and need to be isolated and seen right away.

I heard there is an app that will help me know if I need to be tested?

Yes, there is an app and a website that has been developed by the CDC and Apple. These tools guide people through a series of questions about their health and exposure to determine if they should seek care for COVID-19 symptoms. The tool provides CDC recommendations on social distancing and self-isolating, how to closely monitor symptoms, recommendations on testing, and when to contact a medical provider. The free app can be downloaded [Apple's App Store](#) or on [Google Play](#) or access the tool online at www.apple.com/covid19.

What can people do if they know others who have been diagnosed presumptive positive and they are not taking COVID-19 seriously and possibly spreading it to people? How can they report them?

You should practice social distancing and avoid people who are or who may have a COVID-19 infection.

Do hospitals have policies in place to keep inpatients who have been tested for COVID-19 and whose tests are pending from having visitors in their rooms?

Hospitals and other healthcare facilities are restricting non-essential personnel from visiting people in their facilities. Patients under investigation (awaiting testing) should not have visitors, and healthcare personnel should be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

Is the State testing patients who are in jail?

Patients who are suspected to have COVID-19 and who reside in a correctional facility or in a long term care facility are appropriate for testing by the State lab.

Of the people who have tested positive so far in Louisiana, how many have needed hospitalization? The vast majority of patients who have tested positive for COVID-19 in



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Louisiana have been hospitalized. This is because, with our limited testing ability, we were only testing the most seriously ill people. Now that testing has expanded, both through the State and through commercial laboratories, we can begin determining the number of non-hospitalized people with COVID-19.

What are the appropriate swab kits to use for COVID19 testing?

Providers can use any available Viral Transport Media (VTM) or Universal Transport Media (UTM) available to them, making sure to follow instructions on the testing materials and ensuring the vial is completely closed and sealed.

If an employee on the oil rig tests positive for COVID-19, should we isolate them on the rig or send them home?

According to the CDC, it is safer to remove the worker from the rig. Patients can be more safely isolated in a hospital or home setting, and it's better to have the patient close to medical care in the event that that person's health worsens.

How do I get tested?

The Louisiana Department of Health recommends COVID-19 testing for any patient with fever, respiratory symptoms and a negative influenza test.

Healthcare providers have been advised that testing is recommended for any patient with fever, respiratory symptoms and a negative influenza test provided they have testing supplies.

How do I know to get tested or test family members?

If you are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, you should contact your primary care physician for guidance. Your primary care physician can order tests from commercial labs or the State Lab.

Is everyone who dies being tested for COVID-19?

The only decedents who should be tested for COVID-19 by a coroner are those people who die with respiratory symptoms that are suggestive of a COVID-19, AND who did not have a link to someone with a known COVID-19. There is no need to test those who die of a "COVID-19-like" illness if they have been associated with another case (we'll consider this a COVID-19 death). In addition, there is no need to test for COVID-19 in a person who did not die of a severe respiratory illness suggestive of COVID-19.

What determines whether or not a fatality is attributed to COVID-19?

When we've counted a death as a COVID-19 death it means there has been a positive test result. It does not necessarily mean it is the cause of death. The cause of death could be a combination of COVID-19 and underlying conditions/complications.

What if I don't have a doctor or have insurance?

If you do not have a doctor or if you do not have insurance, contact your nearest community health clinic.



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You can search for a clinic near you at: www.lpca.net/main/for-patients/find-a-health-center. Please use the search tool to find a clinic near you using your zip code. (Do not call the LPCA office main line to locate a clinic. Call 211 if you need assistance.)

Should I go to the ER? Or, when should I go to the ER?

You should go to the ER if you are seriously ill (difficulty breathing, confusion, dehydrated). If you are sick with typical cold or flu symptoms, call your primary care doctor.

If I need to get tested for COVID-19, how much will it cost?

A. The treating physician determines where the test is sent for analysis. And, the State is preparing to test more broadly as the federal government expands its testing guidelines. Testing at the state lab is no-cost, but there are criteria for testing at the state lab.

Today, more testing will be conducted by private labs, and there is a cost. These commercial tests are covered under Medicare, Medicaid, and by most insurance companies as an essential health benefit, and the cost vary depending on your coverage. We are unsure at this point if people without insurance will be charged for a test done by a private lab.

How do we explain the average citizen waiting 5-7 days or longer for test results while someone famous can get results in three days?

Tests run at commercial labs take longer to get back that tests run at the State Lab. The State does not control the testing time for private labs.

Do immigrants have access to testing regardless of identification?

The testing criteria for COVID-19 do not require showing official government identification. Everyone, including documented and undocumented immigrants, who is experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, you should contact their primary care physician for guidance to see if they fit the clinical criteria for testing.

STAY AT HOME ORDER

What is a Stay at Home order?

A Stay at Home order is the Governor directing people to avoid going out in public unless it is absolutely necessary.

Why is this Stay at Home order necessary?

Right now, COVID-19 is spreading rapidly throughout our state and some of our communities and, without taking additional measures, Louisiana's health care system will have more sick people than it can care for. The state is working to increase its health care capacity, but people also need to take measures to prevent the spread of this illness. Our medical community is working overtime to take care of people who are sick, but it needs help from the public to keep even more people from needing care.



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When is it okay for me to leave my home?

People can leave their homes to do things like buy groceries or food, pick up medicine or go to work if their job is essential. If you have to go out, make sure you practice social distancing measures and keep 6 feet between you and the people around you. Also: people are encouraged to go outside and to stay active during this time, as long as they practice social distancing when they are around their neighbors.

Are assisted living residents allowed to come and go off premises as they please?

The CDC has developed extensive guidance for nursing homes, assisted living and other long-term care facilities. These include recommendations about if and when a resident should leave the facility, limits on visitation, restricting volunteers and non-essential healthcare personnel, canceling all group activities and communal dining. To protect their residents, all long-term care facilities in Louisiana have implemented these recommendations.

What should families do who share custody? If a full lock down were to happen, how does an exchange happen between caregivers?

A full lock down is not in place. Families are free to allow their children to visit/stay with their caretakers. Simply follow social distancing and hygiene recommendations.

With Texas' new 14-day self-quarantine for anyone driving to Texas from Louisiana, how does this affect parents who have joint custody with one parent living in Texas and the other in Louisiana?

To speak with a parenting time specialist through Texas Access, call 1-(866) 292-4636 M-F from 1 pm until 5 pm. Calls will be answered in English and in Spanish.

The Texas Supreme Court emergency ruling that came out on March 17, 2020, provides guidance to parents with orders, and gives helpful information about access and visitation and/or possession schedule interruption related to Covid19. This guidance can be found:

<https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446106/209043.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3IW0yGc3IbcCSLiBuU1h9QqywhV0BnwpuJsRRz39p2M7bqJTBJud5trVc>

Texas Legal Services Center (TLSC) has many answers and scenario queries to address Covid19. Parents can also receive free and reduced fee legal advice and help. For more info: www.TexasLawHelp.org

What if I need to get tested for coronavirus or to go to the doctor?

People can leave their homes for medical treatment or to get testing, but they should call their health care provider or doctor before doing so for advice. Your doctor may be able to help you via telemedicine or decide if you need to be tested by asking you questions on the phone. Do not show up to a testing site without consulting a medical professional first, because you may need a doctor's order to qualify for a test. Unless it is an emergency, do not go to a health care facility without calling first, because you may put yourself at risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

What businesses and jobs are considered essential?

Health care workers, public safety employees, some government workers, staff of grocery stores and restaurants and employees of some business are generally considered essential workers.



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Businesses like manufacturers and utilities have to continue operations to support our communities.

In general, the state of Louisiana follows guidance from the federal Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) about what infrastructure and businesses are “critical” during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Is there a protocol in place to report a business that isn't taking any effort to clean their store, despite having employees who tested positive for COVID-19?

People should avoid any place in which they have a concern. When you visit a business, take the necessary precautions: bring your own disinfecting wipes to the store, try "contactless" shopping by ordering and paying. And, stay home as much as possible.

The CDC offers guidance for cleaning and disinfection for businesses: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/>
Click on Resources for Business and Employers.

Can individuals report a store price gouging or scams?

The Louisiana Attorney General operates the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-351-4889.

How will this order be enforced?

The state is working with local law enforcement to support the order. There have been rumors about military control or martial law being declared. These rumors are false.

Why is this order statewide? There are not a lot of cases confirmed in my area.

COVID-19 is rapidly spreading throughout the state and we know that some people do not show symptoms for 14 days, even if they are sick. Just because no one has tested positive in your community doesn't mean that no one is sick. By enacting this Stay at Home order statewide, Gov. Edwards is working to slow the spread of COVID-19 and flatten the curve.

Is the Governor closing Louisiana's borders and declaring martial law?

No. This is a rumor and is not based in fact. Members of Louisiana's National Guard are deployed in Louisiana to help support local testing sites, so you may see members of the military in your community. Martial law has not been declared. Louisiana's borders are not closed.

When is the Stay at Home order going to be lifted?

The Stay at Home order has been extended until April 30 by Gov. John Bel Edwards.

Where can people get more information about what the State of Louisiana is doing in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak?

The Governor's office is constantly updating its website at gov.louisiana.gov, as is the Louisiana Department of Health at ldh.la.gov/Coronavirus. You can also call 211 for general information about COVID-19 and to get connected to help and resources.



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For text message alerts: Louisiana has implemented a new text alert system that provide timely COVID-19 updates and other critical guidance directly from the governor's office to Louisiana residents. Sign up by texting 'LACOVID' to 67283.

Through the Smart911 app or smart911.com, families can provide key context to first responders. This is a free service that allows individuals to provide critical information including pre-existing conditions and quarantine status, in advance, to first responders.

SOCIAL DISTANCING QUESTIONS

Have restaurants, casinos and other places been closed?

Gov. Edwards has taken aggressive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Louisiana including the closing of casinos, bars and movie theaters and limiting restaurants to delivery, take out and drive-through orders only.

Restaurants will not be allowed to have patrons eat on-site. They will be limited to drive-thru, pick-up and delivery orders only. Restaurants must follow these directives:

- Employees who are sick with a fever or respiratory symptoms should not go to work, nor work the drive-through window.
- For all other employees:
 - Wash hands frequently.
 - Do not touch customers' hands when passing food or drinks.
 - Use gloves for contact with money or credit cards. Gloves must be replaced between each customer interaction. If gloves are not available, then hand sanitizer between each customer interaction is acceptable.
 - Clean all frequently touched items, including keypads/touch screens at least hourly.
 - Wear gloves to handle money when clearing the register/cash drawer.

This order has been extended until April 30 by Gov. John Bel Edwards.

What factors would trigger a government-mandated closure of schools or businesses, etc.?

On March 22, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a statewide Stay at Home Order that mandates that Louisiana residents stay home. People are directed they can only leave home if necessary to work, go to the grocery, pharmacy or to fulfill other essential needs.

Earlier directives limited restaurants to only have drive-thru, pick-up and delivery orders. This order has been extended until April 30 by Gov. John Bel Edwards.

For the most up-to-date information about schools and education-specific questions, the Department of Education has established this email address: LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov

Do public gatherings of over 50 people include places like Wal-Mart and grocery stores?



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No, grocery stores can remain open to the public. When shopping for groceries or anything else, limit contact with groups of people, stay at least 6 feet from others and use a sanitizing wipe on your cart. Wash your hands as soon as you get home and avoid touching your face.

We are seeing reports of large public gatherings ... parties, church services, etc. How is the Stay at Home Order being enforced? Who has this responsibility/authority?

Any concerns should be addressed to local law enforcement.

How long should I stay home if I am experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 but do not qualify for testing?

If you are experiencing symptoms, you should call your healthcare provider for guidance. The same is true if you have no symptoms but are exposed to a known contact.

When can I end self-isolation?

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery meaning:
 - fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications and
 - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) and
 - at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

People with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may end self-isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 test and have had no subsequent illness.

Why were these measures put in place?

It is important that people understand the seriousness of this situation. In just a week's time, we went from zero positive cases of COVID-19 to more than 100 cases. This is one of the highest per capita rates of COVID-19 cases in the entire country, and it is expected to continue unless we each change our behaviors.

Right now, everyone is urged to take aggressive measures to contain this virus. We all have a role to play in protecting not just ourselves but our neighbors, friends and everyone else we interact with.

What is social distancing?

Social distancing is a public health practice that aims to prevent sick people from coming into close contact with healthy people in order to reduce opportunities for disease transmission.

Social distancing slows the outbreak to reduce the chance of infection among high-risk populations and to reduce the burden on our health care system and worker.

If we do this right, we can reduce the number of people with disease and reduce the number of people needing hospitalization and ventilators at any one time.

Who does social distancing protect?



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While those who are older and those who have underlying chronic medical conditions – meaning lung disease, heart disease and diabetes – are at the greatest risk, everyone, including people who are young and healthy, can be become exposed to and spread COVID-19 to others.

Does the restriction of gatherings of 50+/10+ apply to “corporate” companies with open offices (no walls) with people sitting closer than 6 feet from one another?

People should try and stay 6 feet from each other as recommended to reduce spread.

Is there anything we call tell workers/other complainants about employers who continue to require employees to work together in crowded conditions?

The Governor’s order is clear in that groups of more than 10 should be avoided. Please provide a copy of the Governor’s order to the caller.

Are there legal protections for workers whose employers are making them come to work?

People are also advised to follow the directives of their employer. For businesses that remain open, the recommendations are to make sure all social distancing and hygiene guidance is being followed.

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND STAFFING

What is the process for out-of-state medical professionals to enlist to help Louisiana?

They may help by registering with volunteer organization (Louisiana Volunteers in Action) and by applying for possible positions with local medical facilities in Louisiana that have staffing needs, such as hospitals and nursing homes. You can register at <http://covid-19lavolunteers.org/>

When is it necessary to acquire a Registered Nurse Temporary Disaster Permit?

For COVID-19 response in Louisiana, the Governor has issued an Executive Order that temporarily allows RNs and APRNs to work in Louisiana for COVID-19 response for employment and for volunteer services without the disaster permit until April 30, 2020.

The RN or APRN must have an active, unrestricted, unencumbered license to practice in any U.S. state, territory, or district; must not have any charges pending against his/her license; and must not be enrolled in an Alternate to Discipline Program. Otherwise, the RN must acquire the permit from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.

To apply for this permit, complete this form from the Louisiana State Board of Nursing’s website: <http://www.lsbns.state.la.us/Portals/1/Documents/Forms/DisasterPermitAffidavit.pdf>

Are all healthcare facilities prohibited from providing medical and surgical procedures?

The order from the State Health Officer directs all licensed healthcare facilities in Louisiana to postpone all medical and surgical procedures. They were not ordered to close.

Instead, they are instructed to postpone non-essential treatment and procedures for 30 days.

These instructions are in place until April 30, 2020. Many offices will remain open to conduct



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these services and procedures. The decision as to which procedures are “essential” are up to the practitioner to decide.

- For outpatient therapy group sessions, small groups (10 people or less) are allowed but social distancing practices and strict hygiene and cleaning requirements must be in place.

Is there a shortage of ventilators for hospitals?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has taken action to help increase the supply of ventilators, ventilator tubing connectors, and ventilator accessories, as well as filtering face piece respirators (FFRs) due to shortages during COVID-19. The FDA issued an Emergency Use Authorization that allows for the emergency use in health care settings of certain ventilators, anesthesia gas machines modified for use as ventilators, and positive pressure breathing devices modified for use as ventilators (collectively referred to as “ventilators”), ventilator tubing connectors, and ventilator accessories that meet FDA criteria for safety and performance.

I understand that some hospitals are not complying with orders to postpone elective procedures. Why?

People still have urgent medical needs that require an elective procedure and cannot be postponed. The decision whether a procedure can be postponed is at the discretion of the clinician.

Directions to operator:

- *Take information about the name, location, date of facility/incident being reported.*
- *This information will be reported to the EOCWATCH and handled by the Health Standards desk and documented as an LDH EOC activity.*

Does dispensing eyeglasses/contact lenses to patients count as a medical procedure?

Yes, this is considered a medical procedure.

How can a loved one be removed from a nursing home?

Talk to the administrator and Director of Nursing at the facility where your loved one lives.

What is the guidance for a healthcare employee who has been exposed to COVID-19?

If this employee is critical to the medical care, response to COVID-19, or assistance with daily living, they can continue to work but they need to wear a mask at work, and monitor their health with 2x daily temperature checks.

If they feel ill (fever >100.4 and/or respiratory symptoms), they need to immediately leave work and self-isolate. They should also call their own healthcare provider for guidance about testing.

If this person is not part of the direct response to COVID-19, then they should go home, self-isolate, and monitor their symptoms, and call their healthcare provider to possibly be tested.

What is the guidance for healthcare employees with suspect or confirmed COVID-19?



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Please use the following updated symptom-based strategy to return to normal activity. Continue isolation until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**,
- At least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Should I keep my children home from school or avoid going to work?

On March 13, Gov. Edwards ordered the closure of all K-12 public schools statewide. This order has been extended until April 30. For the most up-to-date information about schools and education-specific questions, the Department of Education has established a special email address: LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov

What about daycares and preschools?

Daycares and early learning centers run by private entities can remain open unless otherwise informed as the situation progresses. However, we encourage the following guidance for all privately administered daycare programs and early learning centers:

- Encourage children who can stay home to do so.
- Children and Staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently.
- Limit child grouping.
- Encourage frequent cleaning.
- Children with fever or cold symptoms should not participate in these programs for the duration of their illness. Only well children should attend.
- Staff members in high-risk (elderly, those with medical conditions) should be encouraged to stay home.

Is child care assistance available to families?

Beginning March 23, families can access subsidized care for children age 12 and under through the Louisiana Department of Education's Child Care Assistance Program, CCAP. The program assures affordable access to childcare at licensed childcare centers participating in the program. The program is available to families with caregivers who are considered essential personal in the COVID-19 response effort. Go to www.louisianabelieves.com to complete an application.

Can children still get school meals?

Yes, according to the Governor's order. It requires schools to use appropriate social distancing measures, and continue to provide meals or other essential services with applicable staff. You should contact your child's school for specific instructions.



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How can I pick up meals from my child's school? Does the child need to be present for the parent to pick up the meal(s)?

For the most up-to-date information about schools and school meal sites, please contact your child's school district.

Are there services that provide specialized assistance to those supporting young children during this stressful time?

Tulane's Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Program (TIKES) program is offering a free Tele Mental Health Consult for individuals caring for young children in Louisiana.

Childcare center directors, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians can access assistance to support young children through this stressful time, how to talk to young children about COVID-19, self-care, coping, supporting parents and other needs related to behavioral or social emotional concerns.

Access this free service online at <https://tinyurl.com/TulaneTIKES> .

EMERGENCY FOOD BENEFITS (SNAP)

Can I still receive WIC benefits? Is WIC still open for enrollment?

Most WIC clinics are open and some are operating in drive-thru fashion. They are collecting information via phone then a staff member will come to your vehicle. Be sure to have your ID, WIC EBT card, and any other needed documents. Call your clinic or 1-800-251-2229 if you have any questions.

Is WIC issuing new cards?

If WIC participants already have a card, they should keep that card. If someone is newly applying to WIC, they will be issued a card. WIC is not issuing disaster cards.

Officials have declared an emergency. Does that mean we're going to get emergency benefits?

No emergency benefits have been authorized by the federal government at this time. If there are new options available, the Department of Children and Family Services will make announcements on their Facebook page and at www.DCFS.la.gov. If you are not already a SNAP recipient, you can apply for SNAP online. More information can be found at www.dcfsls.la.gov/getSNAP.

Did Congress pass a bill that includes emergency food aid?

Yes, on March 18, the U.S. Senate approved and the President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which includes additional food assistance for some families in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



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DCFS preparing to implement these new provisions and will provide additional information in the coming days on www.dcfs.la.gov/getSNAP

Are we going to have D-SNAP (Disaster SNAP) benefits?

There is no D-SNAP at this time. The federal government appears to be pursuing other possible options for additional food assistance. If any of those options receive federal approval and become available, DCFS will make announcements on its DCFS website and Facebook page.

What food assistance is available to me right now?

If you are not a current SNAP recipient, you can apply online for benefits. More information can be found at www.dcfs.la.gov/getSNAP.

I'm quarantined and/or staying home as advised by officials. Do I have to go into an office to apply for SNAP?

No, you don't have to visit a DCFS office to apply for SNAP! You can apply online or by downloading a paper application and then mailing or faxing it to us. You can also request an application by contacting DCFS at LaHELPU.DCFS@la.gov or 1-888-LAHelpU (1-888-524-3578) toll free. For instructions on how to apply, visit www.dcfs.la.gov/getSNAP.



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PRECAUTIONS

What if someone at my work, school, church has illness symptoms like fever or cough?

Contacts should monitor their health. They should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Testing is recommended, but will be based on availability.

What if someone at my work, school, church has been exposed to someone with COVID-19?

Exposed persons should self-isolate at home. Contacts should monitor their health. They should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Testing is recommended, but will be based on availability.

At work, I have possibly been exposed to someone with COVID-19. Should I still go to work?

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 should stay home and follow self-care guidance until they meet the criteria to return to work. Other employees who have been exposed to the person who tested positive can continue working AND should self-monitor by taking their temperature before reporting for work. They should stay home if they have a fever or become ill.

What if someone at my work, school, church has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

Exposed persons should self-isolate at home. Contacts should monitor their health. They should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Testing is recommended, but will be based on availability.

Do I need to notify someone if someone I know at work, church, school has signs of illness, is suspected of having COVID-19, or has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

No, healthcare providers and laboratories have the responsibility to report to Public Health.

Will the State be contacting every COVID-19 suspected or confirmed case?

Not any longer. As more and more people have illness and are being diagnosed, Public Health will only be following up on people in high-risk disease settings. People suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 should follow the instructions on how to self-isolate to protect their family members.

What should I do if I have come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

You should self-isolate and limit your contact with other people. And, you should contact your primary care physician for guidance. If you develop a fever and a cough, you should contact your doctor.

What steps should I take to protect myself and my family?



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We all have a role in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The single most important thing we can all do is stay home when we are sick. Social distancing, washing hands vigorously and often, coughing into elbow.

There is a nationwide shortage of personal protective equipment such as masks and face shields. Has the State taken steps to help make sure providers get the equipment they need?

The Department of Health has developed guidance for healthcare providers who need this equipment. All providers have been alerted to this guidance by the Department. The guidance is also posted online at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus

Should I wear a protective mask? What about family member?

It is not recommended that most people wear protective masks. This is because most people with fiddle with and touch their masks, limiting any protective benefit. Masks are recommended for healthcare providers. If someone is sick, a mask will limit the spread of the virus by the sick individual. Therefore, the general public is not recommended to use masks at this point, given they don't work well, and they need to be used by healthcare personnel treating those with COVID-19.

What precautions are nursing homes and assisted living facilities taking?

On March 12, the Louisiana Department of Health started requiring all licensed healthcare facilities in the state to restrict visitors to those deemed essential, vital or necessary to the care and well-being of patients, clients and residents. This prohibition will be in place until April 30, 2020 unless otherwise extended by the Department.

Nursing homes, assisted living centers and other similar healthcare facilities have the authority to restrict entry to people, including family members and friends of residents, during this health crisis.

People are advised to contact individual facilities for restrictions and recommendations that have been put in place at that location.

I see people in my neighborhood out running, riding bikes and walking their dogs. Is that OK?

Yes, that's OK. Just be sure to maintain distance from other people. The CDC recommends a distance of about 6 feet. Even in communities where residents are being asked to stay home and "shelter in place," it's still fine to go for a run, hike or do other outdoor activities, as long as proper social distancing is observed.

What precautions should businesses take that remain open to provide essential services?

Businesses that remain open should follow these guidelines:

- Delay or postpone any non-essential appointments.
- Employees who are sick with a fever or respiratory symptoms should not go to work.
- Employees should wash hands frequently.



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- Use gloves for contact with money or credit cards. Gloves must be replaced between each customer interaction. If gloves are not available, then use hand sanitizer between each customer interaction.
- Clean all frequently touched surfaces between each use.

Is it OK to use laundry facilities?

Of course. Just be sure to take basic precautions including:

- Don't enter a laundry if there are more than 10 other customers.
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean surfaces such as folding tables, chairs and the handles on the machines

Can funeral services still be held?

A funeral or visitation service can be held for a person who has died of COVID-19. The ceremony needs to be limited to a group of 10 or less, and attendees must remain more than 6 feet away from the decedent. The remains must be buried or cremated within three days of death

Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent who died of COVID-19.

Am I at risk if I go to a funeral or visitation service for someone who died of COVID-19?

There is currently no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of COVID-19.

The Louisiana Department of Health has posted additional guidance about funerals and the proper handling of decedents who have had COVID-19 at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Just click on Guidance & Resources.

ABOUT COVID-19

What is coronavirus or COVID 19?

Coronavirus or COVID 19 is a contagious virus that makes people sick.

- Symptoms can include:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads. Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:



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- Respiratory droplets produced when coughing and sneezing that can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Close personal contact (within 6 feet of one another)
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

For confirmed coronavirus infections, reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms (similar to the common cold) to people being severely ill and dying.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

Is the loss of the ability to smell or pink eye symptoms of COVID-19?

The novel coronavirus and COVID-19 are new, and we are still learning about the virus. For these symptoms and others, always contact your primary care physician for guidance.

Is it true that elderberry (supplements, vitamins, etc.) can exacerbate the virus in your system?

COVID-19 is a new virus and there is limited evidence on what is effective or harmful to treat the virus. Always speak to your doctor before using a medication for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

Are younger people at risk for a serious illness?

A CDC study published March 17 shows that younger people can develop serious COVID-19 illness requiring hospitalization. This finding is different from the first reports from China.

Younger people are still much less likely to die from COVID-19 than older people.

Can you contract both the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

It is possible to have both the coronavirus and the flu at the same time.

Does getting routine childhood vaccines make children more susceptible to COVID-19?

Childhood vaccines are the best protection against illnesses. Studies have never found a connection between a vaccine for one disease increasing the likelihood for getting another illness.

Is COVID-19 fatal?

While people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. and abroad, the majority of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 do recover. The virus appears to only be severe if it reaches the lungs and remains untreated. Most otherwise healthy people can recover from COVID-19 at home.



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What does “presumptive positive” mean?

The Louisiana Department of Health is no longer tracking “presumptive positive” cases because the CDC has confirmed that the State’s lab is reliable in determining if a case is confirmed as positive.

How can businesses access help for COVID-19 concerns?

On March 27, Gov. Edwards and the Louisiana Economic Development announced the opening of an LED help desk that provides email and hotline support for Louisiana businesses impacted by COVID-19.

The email is LEDbiz@la.gov

Toll-free hotline: 833-457-0531. Staffed 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. M-F.

For businesses seeking federal financial assistance, contact the U.S. Small Business Administration at [SBA.gov/Disaster](https://www.sba.gov/Disaster), or call 800- 659-2955. The TTY line is 800-877-8339.

Do mosquitoes carry CORVID-19/Can the virus be transmitted through mosquitoes?

No. COVID-19 is not transmitted by mosquitos.

Are people diagnosed with HIV+ also at higher risk for contracting COVID-19?

People with compromised immune systems, including cancer patients and people with HIV/AIDS, are at a higher risk from the coronavirus.

Will workers who travel out of state be allowed to come home if the state is quarantined?

The State of Louisiana has not been quarantined.

Do you encourage blood donations at this time?

Yes, click www.aabb.org to search for local blood donation clinics.

TREATMENT

I have heard there are new and effective cures for coronavirus using an anti-malaria drug?

Some doctors in other states have been treating patients with Hydroxychloroquine and/or Azithromycin. This is an “off-label” use and health officials are evaluating its effectiveness with current patients. Always speak to your doctor before using a medication for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

What is the current guidance for ending isolation in a patient with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 symptoms may end self-isolation when:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed *since recovery* meaning:
 - fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
 - improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) **and**



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- at least 7 days have passed *since symptoms first appeared*.

People with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have symptoms may end self-isolation under the following conditions:

- fever free without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
- improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) **and**
- negative results from at least two consecutive nasal swabs collected ≥ 24 hours apart (total of two negative specimens).

People with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms may discontinue self-isolation when at least 7 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test and have had no subsequent illness.

What are the recommendations for a person who has been in close contacts with someone with the illness?

- Help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for care. Help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The patient should wear a facemask when around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask, the caregiver should wear one when in the same room as the patient.
- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly.
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.

Is there a vaccine or medicine to treat COVID-19?



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No. There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for this infection. People infected with COVID-19 receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms.

Is it safe to take ibuprofen to treat symptoms of COVID-19?

The World Health Organization advises against using ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, and other NSAIDs) based on reports of otherwise healthy people with confirmed COVID-19 who were taking an NSAID and developed a severe illness, especially pneumonia. While these are only observations and not based on scientific studies, it is prudent to use acetaminophen (Tylenol) to help reduce fever and ease aches and pains related to this coronavirus infection.

When is someone considered to have recovered?

A person is considered recovered when it has been:

- at least seven days after the onset of illness, and
- at least three after resolution of fever (without the use of fever-reducing medications), and
- Resolution or improvement in respiratory symptoms.

Will the State be contacting every person with a COVID-19 suspect or confirmed case?

- Not any longer. As more and more people have illness and are being diagnosed, Public Health will only be following up on those individuals in high-risk disease settings.

When will the information about the number of patients who have recovered be released to the public?

To date, the Department of Health does not have access to data about patients who have recovered.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

How can I get the most up-to-date information about the pandemic?

The White House Task Force has established www.coronavirus.gov as the centralized website for the federal government. The CDC continues to maintain www.cdc.gov/covid19 site.

General public questions about COVID-19?

If you have questions about coronavirus, contact the Louisiana 211 Network: 2-1-1. This call line is available 24/7, M-F.

Is standard laundry detergent enough to disinfect clothing and prevent spread of the virus?

Yes. You can launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items. Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard the gloves after each use.



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Can pets get or transmit COVID-19?

A. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. It is rare for an animal to infect people and then spread between people such as with recent outbreaks of MERS and SARS.

Nevertheless, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is not considered a threat to dogs and cats, and pets do not play a role in transmission of the virus to people.

Is there special guidance for people who are deaf or blind?

- If you are not feeling well, stay home. Do not put yourself or support service provider, SSP, at risk.
- Touch support service provider only on shoulder or elbow for guiding techniques. Avoid touching support service provider hands or face aside from communicating.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Wash hands immediately after communication interaction.
- Let your support service provider know if you need to sneeze/cough so they can put distance between you.
- Carry and use hand sanitizer in between as needed.
- Allow your support service provider to sit/stand on side of you as much as is comfortable instead of face to face to limit contact of skin and/or bodily fluids.
- Attempt to stand as far apart from your support service provider as is comfortable

- Important: Patients who have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should seek emergency care immediately. Use Video Relay Services, or ask family/friend to contact for you. If necessary, contact Interpreting/SSP office for assistance.

If a person tested positive for COVID-19 can they be re-infected?

There is evidence to suggest that some people have contracted the virus a second time. This means that all people – even those who have already had the illness – should remain vigilant and take the necessary precautions.

What is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The incubation period for COVID-19 is about 5 days. The range is between 4 and 7 days, although it is sometimes quicker and it sometimes may take up to 14 days.

How can a healthcare provider get answers to questions about laboratory testing? ***

Healthcare providers can call the Lab Provider Help phone line, 225-219-5265 (answered M-F, 8am-4:30mp) They can also send an email to COVIDLAB@la.gov Provider emails will be answered 7am-midnight daily, including the weekend.

**** this answer is for providers only, not for the general public*

Does pre-existing respiratory illness qualify you for asymptomatic testing?



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No. Currently, there is no testing for people not experiencing symptoms. COVID-19 testing is based on recent travel to affected areas with combined respiratory illness symptoms, or exposure to a known case of COVID-19. Currently, there is no testing for asymptomatic people.

Has the IRS extended the filing deadline for federal taxes?

In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the IRS has extended the taxpayer filing deadline to July 15, 2020.

How to apply for Medicaid?

Local Medicaid offices are currently closed to the public. Anyone who thinks they may be eligible for Medicaid can apply online: [MyMedicaid.la.gov](https://mymedicaid.la.gov). You can also apply by phone or mail.

- 1-888-342-6207
- Louisiana Medicaid
- P.O. Box 91283
- Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Am I at risk of losing Medicaid coverage during the COVID-19 emergency?

No current Medicaid member will lose coverage for any reason other than death, permanently moving out of state, or requesting to end coverage.

Medicaid applications have been streamlined to ensure anyone eligible for Medicaid who needs health care coverage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has access to coverage.

Are there plans for filling the public's regular medication needs (including prescribed controlled medications) should a mandatory shelter in place order be issued?

People should consult with their regular pharmacy and provider to ensure they have appropriate medications.

How should employees communicate with other employees that they may have been exposed because of another employee without violating HIPPA?

Any person can self-report their own health status. However, people should refrain from discussing the health status others. Medical professionals cannot discuss another person's health status without being in violation of privacy laws.

How long should an employer tell an employee to stay isolated if other employees in the workplace have COVID-19 symptoms?

There are different rules/laws for private and public employers. In state government, an employee may be placed on sick leave and be required to stay home if he/she has symptoms associated with COVID-19. In the private sector, the employee should follow the directive of their employer.

What do I do if my employer demands I get tested for COVID-19 if I was sick?



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There are different rules/laws for private and public employers. In state government, an employee may be placed on sick leave and be required to stay home if he/she is ill for any reason. In the private sector, the employee should follow the directive of their employer.

Can my employer force me to keep working at the facility where there are more than 50 employees at one time, unless I have a doctor's note?

Governor Edwards has issued several directives that limit public gatherings to no more than 50 people. For private businesses that remain open, the recommendations are to make sure all social distancing and hygiene guidance is being followed. People are also advised to follow the directives of their employer.

SYMPTOMS

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

For confirmed coronavirus infections, reported illnesses have ranged from infected people with little to no symptoms (similar to the common cold) to people being severely ill and dying.

Symptoms can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing

How does COVID-19 compare to influenza in terms of symptoms, mortality rate, number of cases, etc.?

Based on what is known, COVID 19 is at least as severe, if not more serious than flu. Much is unknown about COVID-19 about how easily it spreads, who most is at risk.

From preliminary studies, people who are most at-risk for a serious illness from COVID-19 are:

- People over age 60 who also have underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes.
- Consult your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

Is vomiting a symptom of COVID-19?

A new study reports that some people who get the coronavirus will, in very rare instances, experience digestive symptoms like vomiting and diarrhea. However, the primary symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

PREVENTION

What should I do if I have come in contact with someone who has tested positive?

You should self-isolate and limit your contact with other people. And, you should contact your primary care physician for guidance. If you develop a fever and a cough, you should contact your doctor.



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What should I do if I am sick?

Call your doctor immediately if the following:

- Think you have been exposed to COVID-19
- Are over the age of 60 with symptoms
- Have an underlying medical condition like heart, lung, or kidney disease
- Develop a fever
- Develop symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing

Stay home and treat your symptoms as you would with the common cold if the following:

- If you are under 60 and otherwise healthy
- Have not been in contact with someone who has COVID-19
- Have not recently traveled to a country with a high rate of COVID-19

What should I do if I am caring for someone who is sick?

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19, are over the age of 60, or have an underlying medical condition like heart, lung, or kidney disease, and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider immediately.

If you are young, otherwise healthy, and have not been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 or recently traveled to a country with a high rate of COVID-19, stay home and treat your symptoms as you would with a common cold

How can I help protect myself and/or my family?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to this virus. Actions to help protect you and your family include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

How long can the virus stay on hard surfaces, cardboard and fabrics?

Studies suggest that coronavirus can survive on metal for up to five days, on glass for four to five days, and plastic for up to nine days, according to a recent study by the Journal of Hospital Infection. The same studies show coronavirus can survive up to 24 hours on cardboard.

It is not clear yet, but the virus may have a shorter lifespan on fabrics than on hard surfaces.



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For all surfaces, the best bet is to clean visibly dirty areas, then use enough disinfectant for the surface you're cleaning to remain wet for several minutes.

What do I do if prescription medication has been touched/handled by someone who has tested positive for COVID-19?

The CDC does not offer advice on disinfecting package but advises there is a low risk of spread from products or packaging. The CDC advice is to: Wash your hands frequently and avoid close contact with people. Use a sanitizing wipe for the outside of the bottle. Prescription medications are not touched by the pharmacist who fills the prescription.

To be extra-cautious, particularly if you are in a higher-risk group, dispose of outer packaging outside of your home and wash your hands immediately after handling.

Can COVID-19 be spread through exposure to fecal matter, urine, and sewage?

The virus spreads mostly through respiratory droplets and contact with infected patients. But new research suggests that it can also spread through feces. The best prevention is to wash your hands and avoid touching your face.

Should I cancel my travel plans?

If you have a trip planned, check the CDC's site for a risk assessment of your destination. CDC is not recommending that travelers cancel all plans except to specific locations where the threat of COVID-19 spread is significantly higher.

If you travel, take the same precautions you would while home to avoid getting sick or spreading germs including washing your hands thoroughly and often and avoiding contact with sick people.

Should the general public wear masks? What about employees of businesses that are still open?

The CDC is considering updating their advice that currently says masks are not needed for the general public. As more information is learned about how the virus spreads, the CDC is studying whether or not having more people wear masks will prevent transmission of the disease.

Whether or not CDC revises the current recommendations, people must still practice social distancing even if they choose to wear a mask.

Can masks be reused?

Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse. Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands immediately after handling these items.

Coronavirus is noted on Lysol bottles. Why is Covid-19 categorized as new if listed on old Lysol bottles? Should the public expect any new commercially available disinfectant products to address Covid-19?



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Coronaviruses are a family of viruses, and they are not new. There were six existing strains of coronavirus before 2019, some of which cause the common cold. The latest strain, however, is nCoV-2019 (COVID-19) which originated in 2019.

Lysol bottles are not referencing the latest COVID-19, but instead the coronaviruses that cause the common cold. There is no reason to believe, though, that Lysol is not effective for COVID-19, so please use it!

TRANSMISSION

How long can the virus live on food from restaurants?

The coronavirus can be spread in a public restaurant as it can be spread in any public space. If you're about to eat, wash your hands. Wash your hands after using the restroom. If you're concerned about the cleanliness of your table, ask the server to wipe it down for you. Remember that COVID-19 is spread from person to person. If there is an infected person in that area then both person-to-person transmission can occur as well as transmission from a contaminated surface if someone touches it and then touches their face.

What are the best items to use to clean surfaces and protect from COVID-19?

COVID-19 does not require any unique cleaning chemicals to disinfect surfaces. Soap and water works, and you can use an alcohol-based wipe. Baby wipes may not be effective.

How does COVID-19 spread?

Health experts are still learning the details about how this new coronavirus spreads.

- Other coronaviruses spread from an infected person to others through:
- Respiratory droplets produced when coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

Is it safe to receive a package from an 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.

What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Isolation and quarantine are both public health practices that are being utilized to limit the spread of COVID-19. While they are often used interchangeably, they have very different meanings.

Isolation is a strategy used to separate people who are sick with a contagious illness from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of people who are ill to help stop the spread of



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certain diseases. People in isolation may be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or in designated healthcare facilities.

Quarantine is used to separate and restrict the movement of people who may have been exposed to a contagious illness, but do not have symptoms to see if they become sick. These individuals may or may not be contagious.

HEALTH EFFECTS / COMPLICATIONS

What are severe complications from this virus?

Severe complications include pneumonia in both lungs.

Who is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

Those who are most at risk are people over age 60 AND who have severe chronic medical conditions such as heart, lung, kidney disease or diabetes.

Other people who are not age 60, but who have these same medical conditions also face a higher risk than the general population.

What about women who are pregnant?

There is limited data on the effect of COVID-19 on pregnant mothers and their infants. Overall, there does not appear to be an increased risk of severe disease for pregnant women. However, because pregnant women are immunocompromised, they should be considered in the at-risk population.

Social distancing should be practiced. This means visitors will need to be limited during labor and delivery. We are encouraging hospitals to prepare patients for this ahead of admission.

What is the risk to children?

Although infections in children have been reported, there is no evidence that children are more susceptible to COVID-19 or at greater risk of a serious illness. More information is being gathered to determine more about this outbreak.

What precautions are nursing homes and assisted living facilities taking?

Nursing homes, assisted living centers and other similar healthcare facilities have the authority to restrict entry to people, including family members and friends of residents, during this health crisis.

People are advised to contact individual facilities for restrictions and recommendations that have been put in place at that location.



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INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

What should I do if I have recently traveled?

Anyone who recently traveled to China, South Korea, Iran, Italy, or Japan within the previous 14 days, who experiences fever, cough, or other acute illness should contact a healthcare provider as soon as possible and mention your recent travel. Please call ahead and inform the health care provider about your travel history.

I am a recent traveler from Italy. Can I request a COVID-19 test from my provider for peace of mind? I am willing to pay any applicable cost.

COVID-19 testing is only currently available to sick people due to a limited number of tests available. You should monitor your health for 14-days following your return from travel. If you do become ill in the 14-days (especially with fever and cough), stay home and call your doctor. Your doctor can assist with the necessary steps to determine if testing would be appropriate for you. At this time, there is no test for well people who just want to know if they have been exposed.

I am a recent traveler from Italy and experiencing flu like symptoms. I reported this to my healthcare provider at a recent visit and no testing was offered. What should I do next?

Healthcare providers work with the Office of Public Health to determine if a patient should be tested for COVID-19. It is possible that a flu test was done (and was positive), which would be responsible for the symptoms (and be the reason for no COVID-19 testing). If you continue to have concerns or if your symptoms worsen, please contact your healthcare provider.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

Where can I get the most up-to-date information?

- Go to the Department of Health's website: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus
- For information about schools, contact the Department of Education at this email address: LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov

Are there any confirmed cases in Louisiana?

Check the Louisiana Department of Health's website for the most up-to-date information: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus

Are the numbers reported on the website for hospitalized patients cumulative, or just current? If they are the current numbers, is it possible to get how many people have been discharged?

These are cumulative numbers. In other words, they represent all patients who are currently hospitalized as well as those who have since been discharged. At this time, Department is not tracking patients who have been discharged from the hospital as those numbers are not collected/reported in real-time.



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Will the State identify COVID-19 patients?

No. Because of patient privacy laws, the Louisiana Department of Health cannot provide any information that might identify patients. This includes name, residence of patient or any other potentially identifying patient information.

What prevents the health department from reporting cases at a more precise location than at the Parish level?

Federal healthcare privacy laws, better known as HIPAA, do not allow public health officials to disclose certain aspects of reportable diseases, such as addresses or locations of cases within a Parish. The law is designed to protect the identity of patients, ensuring their right to privacy. In addition, the information that is collected (such as address) does not help in disease control, as the person may have been exposed somewhere else.

COVID-19 is now “widespread” throughout Louisiana, and trying to pinpoint locations based on lab tests performed 5-8 days ago as a protective measure would not be effective.

Are counseling services available to the public?

Counseling services are now available at the Keeping Calm during Covid Phone Line. Counselors provide information and service coordination with linkage to mental health and substance use counseling services. Call 1-866-310-7977 | Available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. All calls confidential.

Will Louisiana Health Department's expand testing?

LDH is preparing to test more broadly as the federal government expands its testing guidelines. The Department is in constant communication with the CDC and will test more patients as needed. In addition, the Department expects more tests to take place as commercial labs receive referrals from health care providers.

What is the current COVID-19 situation in Louisiana?

According to the CDC, Louisiana and the entire country is experiencing a historic and unprecedented outbreak. The number of cases of COVID-19 being reported in the U.S. and Louisiana continues to increase quickly.

- With increasing laboratory testing and reporting, CDC expects to see a rise in cases.
- This growing number of cases also reflects a rapid spread of disease across communities.

The Department of Health is providing guidance to doctors for testing and treatment of COVID-19, as well as guidance for home care of patients with coronavirus. This guidance is given to all health care providers via our Health Alert Network.

Additionally, the Louisiana Office of Public Health has activated its Emergency Operations Center and launched public health measures to respond. This is the same strategy being done at the national level under the guidance of the CDC, and in all other states and the District of Columbia.



CAPITAL AREA HUMAN SERVICES

What is the number of tests being given by healthcare providers for COVID-19 around the state of Louisiana? What percentage have been positive?

For the most up-to-date information about cases in Louisiana, please go to the COVID-19 website: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus

How does the process for testing in Louisiana for COVID-19 work?

The Office of Public Health operates a laboratory in Baton Rouge that performs many types of tests for infectious diseases, such as for tuberculosis and measles. State lab workers are a team of highly trained professionals who are experienced at testing for many kinds of infectious diseases using a variety of different tests.

Is the Louisiana Department of Health concerned about shipping channels such as the Port of New Orleans being affected by COVID-19?

Department officials met with the Coast Guard to discuss potential issues with the COVID-19 virus once it became clearer that the virus was spreading globally. We don't think there will be potential for spreading the virus through shipping channels.

What should people do who are returning from countries with high COVID-19 activity?

A. If you were in a country with a COVID-19 outbreak, you should self-isolate for 14 days after your return. If you do not experience any sickness (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) after 14 days, you may resume your regular activities and use the same usual precautions to prevent spread of viruses like the flu (wash hands frequently, cough /sneeze into your elbow, disinfect surfaces).

What if I feel sick within 14 days after returning?

- Seek medical advice – Call ahead before you go to a doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel on public transportation while sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds to avoid spreading the virus to others.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.

GOVERNMENT PREPAREDNESS

What precautions is the State taking to protect our students and school system staff and parent volunteers from possible exposure to the COVID-19?



CAPITAL AREA HUMAN SERVICES

The Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) has been in contact with the Louisiana Department of Education (DOE) in regard to disease control and prevention of COVID-19.

For the most up-to-date information about schools and education-specific questions, the Department of Education has established this email address: LDOECOVID19Support@la.gov

OPH has provided guidance from the CDC on infection control best practices such as handwashing, covering of coughs, disinfection of environmental surfaces, and encouraging students and staff to stay home when they are ill.

Further guidance has been shared on social distancing, cancellation of classes and school events, as well as discouraging social gatherings among students in the event that there is community (person-to-person) transmission of the disease.

What's the next major step in the Department's plan for responding to an outbreak?

Mirroring the federal government's response, LDH is moving from a 'containment' approach focusing on travelers to a 'mitigation' approach anticipating and plan for person-to-person transmission in the community somewhere in the United States. We are focused on state and local government preparedness and are providing support to health care providers, schools, businesses and community members to ensure they are adequately prepared to take action to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We don't want people to be alarmed, but we do want them to be prepared. We also want businesses and health care facilities to be prepared to make sure people are safe and protected so we can avoid an unnecessary spread.

Are quarantines being planned?

LDH does not expect to use its legal authority to quarantine for this particular infection. LDH has extensive quarantine plans stemming from prior health events such as H1N1 and Ebola.

Is LDH in regular contact with the federal government?

Yes. LDH are in constant contact with the US Center for Disease Control and HHS. In addition, LDH standing calls across state health departments and a standing call internally in Louisiana.

Are Louisiana's State Parks open?

All state parks are closed to the public as of March 24, 2020. However, this closure only applies to buildings and facilities. The gates are open from 8 AM to 5 PM so people can do outdoor activities. The closure will remain in effect until April 13.

Bayou Segnette, Chicot, and Lake Bistineau State Parks are currently being used as regional overflow isolation areas and are closed to the public, while Grand Isle State Park is closed to the public per the recommendation of local officials.

What is the protocol in place for responding to a pandemic like Coronavirus/COVID-19?

COVID-19 behaves in many ways similar to influenza. Because of this, the CDC recommends using the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness plan as our model for the response.



CAPITAL AREA HUMAN SERVICES

The Louisiana Department of Health has been working on our Pandemic Preparedness Plan for the last 15 years, and we have been preparing for COVID-19 starting in early January 2020.

In early March, the Governor directed the formation of a COVID-19 Task Force with representation from state agencies and federal partners key to preparing for a COVID-19 outbreak. This task force guides updating Louisiana's pandemic flu/COVID-19 response and ensures a continuity of operations and advises the Unified Command Group.

What factors would trigger a government-mandated closure of schools or businesses, etc.?

Governor John Bel Edwards has issued several directives that limit public gatherings of no more than 50 people. This includes closing schools as well as bars, movie theaters, fitness centers and casinos.

Restaurants will not be allowed to have patrons eat on-site, rather they will be limited to drive-thru, pick-up and delivery orders only. This order has been extended until April 30 by Gov. John Bel Edwards.

The Presidential Primary has also been postponed in the interest of reducing contact of large groups.

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