



COVID-19

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Due to the rapidly evolving nature of the situation, information below is subject to change. The Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) will be updating information as frequently as possible.

For the most current information, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

Q: What is a novel coronavirus?

A: A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold. COVID-19 causes illnesses that can range from the mild to more severe.

Q: How does the virus spread?

A: The virus is most likely to spread through:

- close contact with an infectious person
- respiratory droplets produced when an infectious person coughs or sneezes
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes

Q: How severe is the virus?

A: Experts are still learning about the range of illness from this virus. Reported cases have ranged from mild illness (similar to a common cold) to severe pneumonia that requires hospitalization. So far, deaths have been reported mainly in older adults with prior health conditions.

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

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

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath, difficulty breathing

At this time, the CDC believes that symptoms of COVID 19 may appear in as few as two days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Q: Who is at risk for COVID-19?

A: Currently the risk to the general public is low. At this time, there are a small number of individual

cases in the U.S. To minimize the risk of spread, health officials are working with health care providers to promptly identify and evaluate any suspected cases.

Travelers to and from certain areas of the world may be at increased risk. **Chinese ancestry – or any other ancestry – does not make a person more vulnerable to this illness.** See wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel for the latest [travel guidance from the CDC](#). Current risk assessment (3/3/2020)

- People in communities where COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated, though still relatively low risk of exposure.
- Health care workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 also are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring are at elevated risk of exposure.
- CDC has [developed guidance to help in the risk assessment and management](#) of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.

Q: What is close contact?

A: When a person has been within approximately 6 feet of a person with COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time. The definition of “close contact” used in Nevada is the same as the [CDC definition](#).

Q: What should I do if I have symptoms?

A: Call your health care provider to identify the safest way to receive care. Let them know if you have traveled to an affected area within the last 14 days or have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19.

In order to prevent health care facilities throughout Nevada from being inundated with calls and patients arriving at their locations without prior appointments, local health districts are urging residents to only contact your medical professional if it is a serious situation. **Currently, medical providers in Nevada have the most concern for residents who:**

- Traveled to areas that have widespread/sustained community transmission such as China, Italy, South Korea, Iran and Japan (See CDC list here.)

- Have had direct contact with someone who has been suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19
- Have had severe illness requiring hospitalization for a viral respiratory disease that has no other known cause

Q: Should I be tested for COVID-19?

A: Call your health care professional if you feel sick with fever, cough or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Your health care professional will work with the local health district, DHHS and the CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19, according to the most current CDC guidelines.

Q: What is the treatment for COVID-19?

A: There are no medications specifically approved for COVID-19. Most people with illnesses due to common coronavirus infections recover on their own by drinking plenty of fluids, resting, and taking pain and fever medications. For patients who are more severely ill, medical care or hospitalization may be required. The medical community is continuing to learn more about COVID-19, and treatment may change over time.

Q: What is a PUI (person under investigation)?

A: A PUI is an individual with COVID-19 symptoms, but not necessarily the virus, who may have been exposed through close contact with a confirmed case, recent travel to an affected region, or who has severe respiratory illness requiring hospitalization with no more likely diagnosis and no source of exposure has been identified. PUI determinations are made in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Q: What is a PUM (person under monitoring), otherwise known as an Individual under public health supervision?

A: A PUM is an individual who does not have COVID-19 symptoms but who may have been exposed through close contact with a confirmed case or from recent travel to an affected region. PUM determinations are made in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Q: What is the difference between a confirmed and a presumptive positive result?

A presumptive positive result is when a patient has tested positive by a public health laboratory, but results are pending confirmation at the CDC. A confirmed result has been verified by the CDC.

Q: How is testing for COVID-19 conducted in Nevada?

A: Each of the two public health laboratories, the Nevada State Public Health Laboratory in Reno and Southern Nevada Public Health Laboratory in Las Vegas, has about 800 - 1,000 available test supplies and each can conduct between 40 to 150 tests per day, and as needed.

Q: How is the testing information shared?

A: Test results from both Nevada public health laboratories are immediately reported to the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH) and the specific local health authority. A positive test result is acted on immediately and all potential contacts are identified and evaluated. Decisions regarding quarantine of those that may have been exposed are assessed individually and made on a case-by-case basis depending upon each individual risk.

Q: How much do these tests cost?

A: Public health laboratories are not charging patients for these tests.

Q: Who can get tested for the virus that causes COVID-19 and why?

A: Not everyone needs to be tested. Testing decisions are made on a case-by-case basis depending upon symptoms and potential exposures. The decision to test is made by both the health care provider and public health departments.

Q: Should I be tested for COVID-19?

A: Call your health care professional if you feel sick with fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you live in or have recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19 (e.g., China, Iran, Italy, Japan or South Korea). Your health care professional will work with the local health district, DHHS and the CDC to determine if you need to be tested for COVID-19, according to the most current CDC guidelines.

Q: What if I have symptoms of COVID-19 but have not been around anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

A: If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath but have not been around anyone you know with COVID-19, call your health care provider and ask if you need to be evaluated in person.

Q: How can I protect myself and my family?

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

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

When you are sick, keep your distance from others.

- If possible, stay home from work, school and errands when you are sick. This will help prevent spreading your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Serious respiratory illnesses are spread by cough, sneezing or unclean hands.
- Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school. Especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food

Q: Should I wear a face mask?

A: The CDC is currently not recommending face masks for the general public. Face masks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent spread of the disease and by health care workers and others taking care of someone in a close setting.

Q: What travel advisories are recommended?

A: CDC Travel Health Notices inform travelers and clinicians about current health issues that impact travelers' health, like disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, and natural disasters, in specific international destinations. For updated CDC guidance on current travel advisories to China, visit the CDC's Travel Health page on Novel Coronavirus in China.

Q: How do I plan ahead for COVID-19?

A: Make an emergency plan of action with your household members, relatives, and friends. Visit Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities Resources for Households (on the CDC website) for more information. In addition:

- If the disease starts spreading in your area, health officials might recommend closing schools or canceling events and encouraging people to work remotely to slow the spread of the disease.
- Make plans for alternative arrangements for your child or yourself in the case of a school or university dismissal or shutdown. Also make plans for your elders and your pets, as needed.
- Check in with your work about your sick leave and telework options should you need to stay home to care for a household member.

- Make a list of your emergency contacts—family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, health care providers, teachers, employers, local public health department, and community resources.
- Gather extra supplies, such as soap, tissues, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer. If you or one of your household members have a chronic condition and regularly take prescription drugs, talk to your health provider, pharmacist and insurance provider about keeping an emergency supply of medications at home.

Q: What happens if someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 may have been in close contact to a student or employee?

A: Decisions about the implementation of community measures, including closure of schools, will be made by the local health district in consultation with local, state and federal officials, as appropriate, and based on the scope of the outbreak and the severity of illness. The local health districts will follow guidelines from the CDC.

Additional Information:

- [Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [CDC – Administrators of U.S. Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools](#)
- [CDC – Community and Faith-Based Organizations](#)
- [CDC – Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond COVID-19](#)
- [CDC – Resources for Households](#)

Q: What is the difference between Isolation and Quarantine?

A: Quarantine is for people who are not currently showing symptoms but are at increased risk for having been exposed to an infectious disease. Quarantine is for people who could become sick and spread the infection to others. Isolation is used for people who are currently ill and able to spread the disease and who need to stay away from others in order to avoid infecting them.

Q: Why can't I know the identity of a presumptive case, PUI, PUM, or those who may be part of a contact investigation?

A: State and federal law protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals' health information (commonly known as protected health information or PHI). Recognizing the legitimate need for public health authorities and others responsible for ensuring the public's health and safety to have access to PHI, state and federal law permit certain entities to disclose protected health information only to entities who are legally authorized to receive such reports for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease.

Q: What should I do if I don't have insurance or a health care provider?

A: Medically uninsured patients seeking care are encouraged to visit a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) in their community. FQHCs are defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration as providing comprehensive, culturally competent, quality primary health care services to medically underserved communities and vulnerable populations. To find an FQHC near you, please visit <https://www.nvpca.org/content.asp?contentid=150>.

Q: What can I do to help?

A: The news of this disease outbreak is concerning to all of us, but especially impacts communities who have family or other close connections in China or the greater Asian continent. We should all do our part not to make assumptions by discriminating, spreading misinformation, or harassing individuals, families and communities that have made Nevada their home. Just because a disease originates within a certain area of the world does not mean that every person who has an association with that country is ill or has the potential to contract the virus.

It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and health officials recommend getting a flu vaccine if you haven't done so yet; taking everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs (staying away from others when sick; washing hands frequently; avoiding touching your face, mouth or eyes); and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

If you are a health care provider caring for a novel coronavirus patient, please take care of yourself and follow recommended infection control procedures.

Q: Will warm weather stop the outbreak of COVID-19?

A: It is not yet known if weather and temperature impact the spread of COVID-19. Some other viruses, like the common cold and flu, spread more during cold weather months, but that does not mean it is impossible to become sick with these viruses during other months. At this time, it is not known whether the spread of COVID-19 will decrease when weather becomes warmer.

Q: Where can I get more information about the COVID-19 outbreak?

A: You can call the Southern Nevada Health District's Information Line at 702-759-INFO for updated information about the COVID-19 outbreak. Current information is also available on the Health District website at www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus.