

## Information for our patients about COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

### How is the virus spread?

COVID-19 mainly spreads from person to person, similar to the flu. This usually happens when a sick person coughs or sneezes near other people and releases respiratory droplets. It may also be possible to get sick if you touch a surface that has the virus on it and then touch your mouth, nose, or eyes.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms typically start 4–5 days after exposure or infection. The symptoms are often indistinguishable from influenza (flu). The majority of patients have one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Feeling fatigued
- Shortness of breath
- Muscle aches/pains

### Do I need testing?

Patients without symptoms do not need testing. Patients with symptoms may need testing if they are in a high-risk group:

- Hospitalized
- Over age 60
- With a high-risk medical history that includes conditions such as diabetes or heart disease.

If you think you may need testing, please contact your doctor by phone.

### Are there medicines that I should or should not take?

Currently, there are no medications specifically approved to treat or prevent COVID-19, outside of over-the-counter medications to manage symptoms.

ACE-inhibitors (medications that end in “-pril”) and Angiotensin-receptor blockers or ARBs (medications that end in “-tan”) are used to treat high blood pressure and other conditions. There is VERY LIMITED evidence these medicines may increase risk of COVID-19 infection. If you develop the flu-like symptoms listed earlier, discuss with your doctor if you should consider stopping these medications.

### How do I prevent COVID-19?

There is currently no vaccine. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the CDC) recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the transmission and spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (maintain a 4–6 foot radius away) and crowded locations.
- 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. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty. Tips: [www.cdc.gov/handwashing](http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces at home, work or school, using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Handwashing tips:  
[cdc.gov/handwashing](http://cdc.gov/handwashing)



- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

### Should I wear a facemask?

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

### Stay informed

The federal, state and local governments are changing their recommendations rapidly. Please check with these specific agencies for up to date information.

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, at [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)
- The California Department of Public Health, at [cdph.ca.gov](http://cdph.ca.gov)
- Your county’s public health department

**Do I need to, or should I, get tested for COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)?**

Not necessarily.

**Why not?**

The level of disease spread within the community is now at a level where public health officials are no longer trying to trace how people became infected. At this point, health agencies are now treating coronavirus like most other cases of the flu or a cold. As a result, it is no longer necessary for everyone who may be infected to be tested.

**Why?**

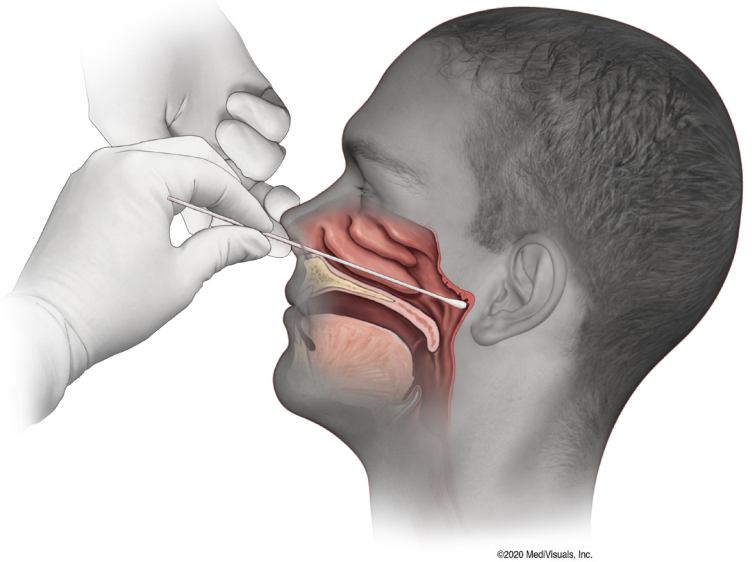
Based upon what we have learned about the disease, and the level of spread within California, COVID-19 is now being spread widely within the community. Much like colds and the flu, not everyone who gets the infection needs to be tested, and many people will have infections which can be managed at home, without professional medical attention.

**Who should be considered for testing?**

Tests will primarily be for hospitalized or severely ill patients. Older people (over 60), and individuals with underlying medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, or cancer — conditions that put them at much higher risk from COVID-19 — will also be a priority for testing. The availability of more tests may make testing available for a wider range of patients in the future.

**How do I know if I need medical attention?**

Just like any other medical condition, there are times when you need to see your primary care provider and times when you need to seek hospital-level care. Most of those same conditions apply to COVID-19. If you need to go to the hospital because you are having a medical emergency, call 9-1-1 or get to a hospital immediately. If you have symptoms that are difficult to



manage, but not that serious, call your primary care provider or seek urgent care. If you have symptoms that seem like a common cold, but aren't that serious, isolate yourself, treat it at home, and try not to share the infection with others.

**Do I need to be quarantined?**

If you are sick with any kind of infectious disease, you should isolate yourself away from others, and take steps to avoid sharing the disease with other people or pets. You do not need to report being sick with COVID-19 in the same way that you do not need to report being sick with a common cold or the flu.

**Do I need to talk to a doctor or nurse?**

If your symptoms or your medical condition are serious enough that you need medical assistance in managing your condition, then you should call your doctor, health care provider, advice nurse, or other health care professional.