



## COVID-19 FAQ

**WHAT IS COVID-19?** Covid-19 is a strain of a coronavirus which actually is a very common virus that causes the common cold. This strain only infected animals until it mutated and now is infecting humans.

**WHY ARE SO MANY PEOPLE GETTING INFECTED?** Our bodies have never seen this form of the virus and no one has immunity to it. Also there is no vaccination. This means that anyone who comes into contact with the virus has a high risk of getting infected.

**WHAT CAN I EXPECT IF I GET SICK?** It typically causes upper respiratory symptoms with a fever, cough and shortness of breath. Others feel like they have the flu. GI symptoms have also been reported. Children, even very young children, have actually tolerated this virus very well.

**WHO IS AT RISK FOR BECOMING VERY ILL?** The elderly and those with chronic conditions such as diabetes, COPD, and chronic illness that affect the immune system such as lupus and Rheumatoid Arthritis are all at a higher risk. The elderly have slow reacting immune systems. When they have other underlying chronic health conditions, the virus can be devastating.

**SHOULD I GET TESTED IF I FEEL LIKE I HAVE A COLD?** First and foremost, call your doctor and ask for their advice. The test will not necessarily change how you are managed. If you are not having severe symptoms, especially trouble breathing you can assume you have the virus and self-quarantine. There is no medication you can take that will cure the coronavirus. Treatment is symptomatic, using acetaminophen for pain and fever. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen and Naprosyn, presently are not recommended since they may worsen the course of Covid-19. Maintain a healthy diet and don't let yourself get dehydrated.

**IF I CAN'T SEE MY DOCTOR, SHOULD I GO TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT?** It is always your prerogative to seek care at the emergency department. However presently there are very specific criteria on testing and the healthcare professional may not even test you for Covid-19. Also, the hospitals are overcrowded and there is actually a higher risk of contracting the virus if you are in a waiting room with numerous other people.

**WILL CALLING AN AMBULANCE GET ME SEEN SOONER? ABSOLUTELY NOT!** Emergency Departments have to triage people based on symptoms and if there are no open beds in the ER

and you have good vital signs, you may be sent to the waiting room or left in the hall exposed to the local environment. As stated before, it is important that you work with your primary care doctor to manage your medical care.

**HOW DOES SOMEONE SELF-QUARANTINE?** The term actually covers several different levels of quarantine. You can view quarantine as having different levels

**Level One** is what the state is now doing with closure of schools and businesses. People are working from home and taking classes on line. No one in this group is symptomatic and has no known exposure to the virus. This group would do the following

- Social distancing: maintain a distance of about 6 feet if coming into contact with people on the street or in the stores.
- Wash your hands frequently and use standard hygiene. Hand washing for 20 seconds with soap and water is very effective against killing the virus.
- Carry alcohol based (60% or greater) sanitizer and use frequently especially if you are touching objects such as packages, groceries, mail or someone else's personal property.
- Clean down the counters with bleach or bleach products. Both are effective in killing the virus.
- Avoid rubbing your face.
- Get out doors and take a walk or play catch with your kids. Exercise is great for the physical and mental health!

**Level Two** is when there is a suspected exposure. This is when you may have come in contact with someone who is documented to have the virus. Another example is when people visited countries such as China and Italy where the virus was reaching epidemic proportions. In these cases you may or may not have been exposed. This group would do the following:

- Self-quarantine as above for 14 days from the time of the potential exposure.
- Avoid any group interactions such as going to the grocery store unless absolutely necessary.
- Stay away from family and friends who are elderly and/or have chronic diseases such as diabetes, asthma, COPD and poor immune systems.
- You can get outside but always maintain social distancing.

**Level Three or Isolation.** People in this category are positive for the Covid-19 virus or have been tested and are high risk for being positive. Most will be sent home and should work on maintaining a distance from even family members.

- Wear a mask if available when around other people.
- Use space isolation where you quarantine yourself to a section of the house.
- No sharing utensils, towels, sheets, blankets etc.
- Wash down with bleach anything you touch.
- If possible, use a separate bathroom.
- You can get outside but keep a distance from others.