Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) 
Frequently Asked Questions

What are the signs or symptoms of coronavirus?

The new coronavirus known as COVID-19 is a respiratory disease. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms, but some people will get sicker, have severe symptoms and need to be hospitalized.

These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

What should I do if I think I have a respiratory illness or COVID-19?

- If you are sick and have mild symptoms, stay home and self-isolate as much as possible.
- If you are sick enough that you would normally go to the doctor, call ahead to your care provider for instructions.
- To avoid spreading respiratory illnesses, please do not show up at a clinic, hospital, or testing site without calling in advance for instructions.

How do I get tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 testing requires an order from a licensed medical provider following a clinical assessment. At this time, you cannot just show up for testing. The provider will ask about your symptoms, travel history and other factors. Because we are still in cold and flu season, patients with upper respiratory symptoms may first be tested for influenza.

Where can I be tested for COVID-19?

COVID-19 testing requires an order from a licensed medical provider. You cannot just show up at a testing site. Both Billings Clinic and St. Vincent Healthcare have set up temporary testing sites.

- St. Vincent Healthcare’s site is in parking lot M, at the northwest corner of North 27th Street and 11th Avenue North.
- Billings Clinic’s site is located in the former dialysis unit on the west side of the hospital building.

Call ahead for more information:

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- Billings Clinic HealthLine: 406.255.8400
What can I do to prevent exposure to COVID-19?

- Practice social distancing (avoiding large crowds, especially in enclosed spaces). Maintain a minimum 6-foot distance between you and other people.
- Avoid crowds and other congregate settings, especially in poorly ventilated spaces.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- **Clean your hands often.** 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 a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Stay home as much as possible, especially if you are over age 60 or have chronic medical conditions or your immune system is compromised.
- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs.
- Practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, keyboards, phones, computer mouse, remote controls, toilets, faucets, sinks) with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface. Follow instructions on the label.
- Pay attention for potential symptoms that may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

I was in another state and returned home yesterday. Do I need to be tested for COVID-19?

Generally, you need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. You should monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath. Your employer may ask you to report any recent travel history.

- If you get sick with a fever, or cough, but have **mild symptoms**, stay home and self-isolate as much as possible.
- If you are sick enough that you would normally go to the doctor, **call ahead** to your care provider for instructions.
- **To avoid spreading respiratory illnesses,** please do not show up at a clinic, hospital, or testing site without calling in advance for instructions.

The decision to test for COVID-19 is based on symptoms, potential exposure to someone who tested positive for COVID-19, and other possible respiratory illnesses.

**Testing requires an order from a medical provider.** To avoid possible spread of respiratory illnesses, please do not show up at a clinic, hospital, or testing site without calling in advance for instructions.

When does somebody need to be quarantined?

The decision to quarantine a person is based upon travel history to a high risk country or an area of the United States with COVID-19 cases or a potential exposure to a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. While in quarantine, people should limit exposure to other family members, not leave home for work, school, or other activities. Monitor your temperature twice a day.

Yellowstone County and national public health experts advise taking these steps while quarantined at home:

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• Stay home except to get medical care. Don’t go to work, school or public places. Avoid public transportation, like buses or ride sharing.
• Wear a face mask while in close contact with people in the home. If you are unable to wear a mask, other people in who are with you should wear face masks to protect themselves. If a face mask is not available for family members and you cannot wear a face mask, keep a distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and your family members.
• Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough and sneeze. Throw the tissue away immediately in a lined trash can and wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
• Don’t share food, drinks, dishes, towels or bedding with other people or pets. Items that you use should be thoroughly washed with soap and water, in a dishwasher or clothes washing machine. Laundry should be dried on the hottest setting appropriate for the fabrics.
• Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face.
• If you develop signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath) while in quarantine, contact your medical provider.
• If you have a medical emergency and need to call 9-1-1, tell the dispatcher that you have been tested for COVID-19 and are in home quarantine so emergency responders can be properly prepared to care for you.

My roommate was tested for COVID-19 and the test results aren’t back yet. What should I do?

Your roommate will have been told to quarantine themselves until the test results are received. You should monitor your temperature twice a day for 14 days (or until test results are received) and follow these instructions to prevent exposure to COVID-19:

• Stay in a different room or be separated from your roommate as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
• Practice social distancing -- maintain a minimum of a 6-foot distance between you and your roommate and other people.
• Do not have visitors unless it is essential.
• **Clean your hands often.** 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 a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
• Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
• Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs.
• Clean all high-touch surfaces daily including: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, keyboards, phones, computer mouse, remote controls, toilets, faucets, sinks. Use gloves, household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants that are appropriate for the surface, following label instructions.
• Clean any surface that has had contact with blood, stool, or body fluids.
• Pay attention for potential symptoms that may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Call your healthcare provider if you develop these symptoms.

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I've heard the term “flattening the curve,” what does that mean?

In epidemiology, the idea of slowing a virus' spread so that fewer people need to seek treatment at any given time is known as "flattening the curve." Ways to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 include protective measures such as "social distancing," e.g. avoiding crowds, staying 6 feet away from others, etc. Flattening the curve, or slowing the infection rate, helps the healthcare system not get overloaded with sick patients beyond its ability to care for people.

I live with a family member who tested positive for COVID-19. What should I be doing?

Close contacts of people who test positive for the COVID19 virus will be identified and contacted by public health nurses and instructions provided.

What if I am identified as having contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19?

Public health nurses are working with people who have tested positive for COVID-19 to identify others that have been in close contact with them that could be potentially exposed to the virus. The nurse then conducts contact investigations. Based on the level of exposure, those contacts will be categorized into risk levels from “high” to “no identifiable risk”. Each risk level has management guidelines for individuals who have or do not have symptoms.

What is a “close contact”?

Close contact includes:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 case for about 10 minutes, OR
- Having direct contact with infectious secretion from a sick person with COVID-19, such as being coughed or sneezed on, kissing, or sharing utensils.

Are there guidelines for businesses to screen their employees for COVID-19?


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