Frequently Asked Questions

SYMPTOMS AND POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO COVID-19

1. **What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**
   
   Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and/or loss of taste or smell.

2. **Can I do a self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms and risks?**
   
   The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has developed a screening tool which asks about symptoms, potential risks (e.g., recent travel history), and potential contact with others who may have COVID-19. Based on your answers to the questions, the screening tool will identify next steps.

3. **What should I do if I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who is being tested for COVID-19?**
   
   If you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or who is being tested for COVID-19, you should follow the instructions found here. Close contact is defined as spending prolonged periods of time in the same room (more than 5 minutes), direct personal contact (e.g., hugging), contact with respiratory secretions (e.g. cough, sneeze on you), and shared eating/drinking utensils.

TESTING

4. **I've been tested for COVID-19 but have not yet gotten my test results. Who should I contact?**
   
   If you have been tested for COVID-19 but have not yet received your results, contact your healthcare provider. Tests performed by the SD Public Health Laboratory have a one-day turnaround time. This timing is dependent on availability of testing supplies. The SD Public Health Laboratory reports the results back to the submitting laboratory. The submitting laboratory notifies the healthcare provider who will notify the patient of their results. Tests performed by commercial testing facilities can take up to 7 days for results.

CARE19 APP

5. **What is the Care19 app?**
   
   Care19 is a location tracking app for your mobile device that will help the South Dakota Department of Health understand and predict COVID-19 infection rates in South Dakota. One of the most effective tools we have in our battle against COVID-19 is the ability to isolate people who have contracted the virus and identify others they came into contact with so they can isolate as well. The more effective the Department of Health can be at identifying people who have been exposed to the virus, the better we will be able to flatten the curve and reduce the spread of COVID-19. For more information about the Care19 app, click here.

6. **Will my personal information be shared?**
   
   No. Your information is 100% anonymous and will be used in an aggregated form. In the event you test positive for the virus, you can consent to make your location data available at your discretion to the South Dakota Department of Health.
7. Is my data safe?

Yes. This is a voluntary “opt in” opportunity. All users will remain completely anonymous the entire time. App users are assigned a unique Care19 ID number upon startup of the app. There is no name, contact information, or credit card associated with your unique Care19 ID number. Care19 logs your location while protecting your data. Users can opt out at any time. If an individual tests positive, it is only at that time that Department of Health staff will ask if they are using the app and if they will consent to provide their location history to help with contact tracing.

8. If I change my mind, can I uninstall Care19 and delete all data that it collected?

Yes, this application works like any other application and may be deleted at any time from your device. In addition, you have the ability through the “About Screen” in the application to delete all data that has been collected from your use of the application as well as see the data that has been collected.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. Beyond hand washing and social distancing, what else can I do?

Individuals who have fever and other symptoms, such as a cough or difficulty breathing, should stay home and call their healthcare provider for medical advice. The best way to prevent contracting and spreading COVID-19 is to reduce exposure.

During this time, it’s natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Taking care of your emotional health during this time will help you think clearly and react to urgent needs to protect you and your family. Self-care is essential. Remember to maintain some level of normalcy. If you or someone you know needs help with mental health issues (e.g., depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts), call 1-800-273-8255.

10. What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

Isolation and quarantine help protect the public by preventing exposure to people who have or may have a contagious disease like COVID-19. Isolation is for people who are already sick. Isolation separates and restricts the movement of the sick individual so they can’t spread the disease. Quarantine is for people who are not sick but may have been exposed. Quarantined individual must stay at home or another location so they don’t unknowingly spread the disease to others. For more information about isolation and quarantine, click here.

11. How long can the COVID-19 virus live on surfaces?

As a general guide here’s how long the virus can live on some of the surfaces people touch on a daily basis: metal – 5 days; wood – 4 days; plastic – 2-3 days; cardboard – 24 hours; aluminum – 2-8 hours; glass – up to 5 days; and paper – up to 5 days. To reduce the chance of catching or spreading coronavirus, individuals should clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects in their home and office every day. After visiting the drugstore or supermarket, or bring in takeout food or packages, people should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

12. What can employers do to help reduce the spread of COVID-19?

Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick. If you suspect an employee is ill or has been exposed, follow CDC guidelines and separate them from others as soon as possible and send them home. More detailed strategies are outlined by the CDC here and within the Department of Health COVID-19 Business Q&A.

13. What should owners of public establishments do during this time?

Consider business arrangements and innovative ideas to support critical infrastructure sectors as those employees have a special responsibility to maintain their normal work schedule. More frequently asked questions for employers regarding workplace safety can be found at in the COVID-19 Business Q&A.
FOOD SAFETY

14. Can COVID-19 be spread through food including restaurant take-out, refrigerated or frozen packaged food?

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person to person through respiratory droplets. Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Anyone handling, preparing and serving food should always follow safety food handling procedures, such as washing hands and surfaces often. Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds for general food safety. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, like a packaging container, that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.

15. If a worker in a meat processing plant became infected with coronavirus, would the meat produced at that facility be safe to eat?

Public health and food safety experts do not have any evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging.

BACK TO NORMAL PLAN

16. Where can I find more information about South Dakota’s Back to Normal Plan?

More information about South Dakota’s Back to Normal Plan can be found here.