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 15 minutes), direct personal contact (e.g., hugging), contact with respiratory secretions (e.g. cough, sneeze on you), and shared eating/drinking utensils.

4. **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 of another location so they don’t unknowingly spread the disease to others. For more information about isolation and quarantine, click here.

5. **Can I practice social distancing outside?**
   
   It is possible for an individual to follow CDC social distancing guidelines for isolation or quarantine while outdoors. Department of Health staff will provide instructions to individuals who are in isolation or quarantine specific to the person’s situation.

6. **Why does the Department of Health issue public health notices identifying a business as a source of potential COVID-19 exposure in some situations but not others?**
   
   The Department of Health will issue a public health notice when an employee or patron of a business is unable to identify persons they were in close contact with (15 or more minutes within 6 feet or less) while able to transmit the virus. Public notices allow individuals who may have been exposed to monitor their symptoms regularly and help them more quickly associate that their symptoms may be due to COVID-19. When a business has a case, even if transmission is identified among employees, the Department of Health does not issue a public notice if all close contacts can be identified.
FLATTENING THE CURVE

7. What does “flattening the curve” mean?

Flattening the curve relates to reducing the rapid transmission of COVID-19, which would lead to a large peak in cases and hospitalizations occurring at one time.

CARE19 APP

8. What is the Care19 app?

Care19 is a location tracking app for mobile devices to help the Department of Health understand and predict COVID-19 infection rates in the state. One of the most effective tools we have against COVID-19 is to isolate people who have contracted the virus and identify others they came into contact with so they can isolate as well. The better the Department of Health is 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.

9. 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 Department of Health.

10. 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.

11. 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. You also have the ability through the “About Screen” to delete all data that has been collected from your use of the application as well as see the data that has been collected.

FOOD SAFETY

12. 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.

13. 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.
GENERAL QUESTIONS

14. 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](#).

15. Who can I reach out to if I have a need to talk to someone about my emotional health?

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.

16. 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 bringing in takeout food or packages, people should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.