

SEEKING CARE FOR CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Guidance to delegates and
staff regarding health support
for coronavirus in NY/NJ/CT

Last updated
12 March 2020

SEEKING CARE FOR CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

Guidance to delegates and staff regarding health support for coronavirus in NY/NJ/CT

Last updated 12 March 2020

BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are a large family of respiratory viruses. Some cause less severe diseases, such as the common cold, and others more severe diseases, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The current outbreak of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is increasing in New York City and surrounding areas, including New York State, New Jersey and Connecticut.

PREVENTION AND GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

COVID-19 is moderately infectious and is able to be passed from human to human, primarily by drop-let spread, as with other respiratory viruses. To prevent infection:

- **AVOID CLOSE CONTACT** with people who are ill with fever, cough or respiratory symptoms.
- **PRACTICE “SOCIAL DISTANCING”** – keep 1 m (3 feet) from others and develop an alternate greeting – do not shake hands, hug or kiss.
- **WASH YOUR HANDS** with soap and water for 20 seconds – or sanitize your hands frequently using an alcohol-based hand rub. These are two of the most effective measures available.
- **DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE** with unwashed hands.
- **CLEAN OR DISINFECT YOUR WORK AREA** before use (particularly if you share equipment with others) using a regular household cleaning spray or disinfecting wipes.

- **AVOID HIGH-DENSITY GATHERINGS** where you are in close contact with others for extended periods, such as rush hour commuting or other crowded gatherings. Consider telecommuting, biking or walking to work, if possible.
- **GET A FLU VACCINATION** – it will not protect you from COVID-19, but it will help prevent influenza which has similar symptoms to this particular coronavirus.
- Note: there is **NO NEED FOR WELL PEOPLE TO WEAR A MASK.**

PROGRESS OF COVID-19 ILLNESS

If you become infected, the incubation period (the time until you develop symptoms) is from 2 to 14 days, but most commonly after about 4 days. While it is theoretically possible to be infectious before developing symptoms, this is believed to be very uncommon. The early symptoms are:

- **FEVER**
- **COUGH** (initially dry) or a sore throat
- **MALAISE** (feeling 'unwell') and **MYALGIA** (sore muscles and joints)
- **SNEEZING** (in a small percentage of cases)
- **SHORTNESS OF BREATH** often develops later and is a marker of a more severe disease. **If breathing becomes difficult at any time, contact a doctor urgently.**

IF YOU BECOME UNWELL

The best possible care you can get is from a health-care practitioner who knows you and your medical history. If you do not have one already, seek out a primary care physician. Ensure you know how to see a doctor where you live and where you work.

Most people (just over 80%) will have a mild illness. If you develop symptoms, do the following:

- **STAY AT HOME OR IN YOUR ACCOMMODATION.** Do not go to work or attend meetings in person, do not go to public places or use public transport (including taxis or lift services) and consider whether you should visit any friends who are elderly or have chronic illness.
- **COVER YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH WITH A TISSUE OR SLEEVE WHEN SNEEZING OR COUGHING** – do not use your hands.
- **TAKE SYMPTOMATIC TREATMENT FOR YOUR ILLNESS.** Most people (more than 80%) will have a mild illness that can be effectively treated with simple over-the-counter medications
 - ▶ Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) 500 mg every 4-6 hours
 - ▶ Ibuprofen (e.g. Advil, or similar) 400 mg every 4 to 6 hours

- ▶ Most 'cold and flu' medicines often contain acetaminophen and a cough suppressant or sedative – do not take both cold and flu medicine and Tylenol together or you risk taking too high a dose.
- ▶ **If you develop more severe symptoms, particularly shortness of breath or chest pain, seek medical care.**

During working hours:

- ▶ Call your primary care physician, or
- ▶ Call an 'urgent care center'. There are many of these that you can search for online: Medrite, Urgent Care, Minute Care, CityMD etc.
- ▶ Tell the clinic staff your symptoms, any exposures to people with COVID-19, and any travel you have had in the last 14 days.
- ▶ Follow the clinic's instructions. If you are coughing, wear a mask if you have one.
- ▶ You will be treated or referred according to your symptoms. Remember, there is no antibiotic, medication or vaccination that can cure or prevent COVID-19.
- ▶ **If you need immediate medical support in an emergency while on NY UN premises, please see the medical team in the Walk-in clinic on the 5th floor. If you are not able to go to the Walk-in clinic, dial the Security Ops Center (212) 963-6666. The Ops Center will dispatch a medical team to the incident location.**

Out of working hours:

- ▶ Call your Primary Care Provider after-hours number, if they have it, or
- ▶ Call ahead to the closest emergency department
- ▶ Tell them your symptoms, any exposure to people with COVID-19, and any travel
- ▶ Follow their instructions. If you are coughing, wear a mask if you have one
- ▶ You will be treated or referred according to your symptoms. Remember there is no antibiotic, medication or vaccination that can cure or prevent COVID-19.

TESTING

The time from infection to symptoms is 4 days on average. If you are unwell and visit your primary care provider, an urgent care clinic or a hospital emergency department, you may be tested. Key points to note are:

- ▶ Your provider will work with the State's health department to determine if you need testing.
- ▶ Tests can only be ordered by a doctor and if medically necessary.
- ▶ It is unlikely that testing will be ordered for minor symptoms or no symptoms.

- As testing becomes more available, and as cases become more common in the region, the threshold for testing will decrease. There will be less review of exposure and more focus on symptoms that match coronavirus.
- A test uses 2 nasopharyngeal (nasal) swabs and 2 oropharyngeal (throat) swabs. It is not a blood test. The test cannot be done on the spot, but must be sent to an accredited laboratory. The United Nations does not have the capacity to test or to take samples.
- The test will take from 1-3 days to be completed, depending on the lab used.
- Tests are usually covered under regular insurance, or as part of the State's public health programme. If in doubt, ask at the time. In general, the public health measures mean the test will be free or affordable for all. In NYC, the Mayor has confirmed care will be provided independent of insurance or immigration status.

IF THE TEST IS NEGATIVE: It will usually be repeated. If the second test is negative, you will be considered to not have COVID-19. However, if you are still unwell, follow the regular advice regarding illness and do not go to work.

IF THE TEST IS POSITIVE: It is likely you will be contacted by the local Department of Health to undergo contact tracing. You will be asked to isolate yourself until completely free of symptoms.

FINDING A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Primary Care physicians / Walk-in clinics

- In New York City, call 311, or visit nychealthandhospitals.org to find a provider.
- In New Jersey, call 1 800 222 1222 or 1 800 962 1253 specifically about COVID-19, or visit: <https://www.njdoctorlist.com/NJPublic>
- In Connecticut, visit the CT Department of Public Health.
- **If you need immediate medical support in an emergency on NY UN premises, please see the medical team in the Walk-in clinic on the 5th floor. If you are not able to go to the Walk-in clinic, dial the Security Ops Center (212) 963-6666. The Ops Center will dispatch a medical team to the incident location.**

Mental Health

If you feel anxious or worried about the coronavirus, or during isolation or quarantine:

- In NYC, call NYCWell, 888-692-9355
- In NJ or CT, call SAMHSA 1-800-662-HELP

ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE

Isolation and quarantine are often used together, although they mean separate things:

- Isolation is for someone who is sick and focuses on preventing spread.
- Quarantine is for someone who is well but has been exposed to the virus and focuses on close monitoring to detect if they become infectious. As someone becomes infectious in the very early stages of symptoms starting, in many cases the two are treated similarly.

Isolation

- Restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding.
- Clean ‘high touch’ surfaces, including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, etc.

Quarantine

For quarantine, there is more emphasis on actively monitoring health to find symptoms early. If you remain symptom free for 14 days after your exposure, then you can resume normal activity.

SUMMARY

Identify a health-care provider before you become unwell

	At Home (Name & Contact #)	At Work (Name & Contact #)
My Primary Care		
Hospital		
Hospital		

Assistance on COVID-19 or seeking medical care

	Telephone	Website
New York	311	https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org
New Jersey	1 800 222 1222 or 1 800 962 1253	https://www.njdoctorlist.com/NJPublic
Connecticut	N/A	https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus

If you are unwell

Fever Cough Malaise, sore joints Shortness of breath	<p>Do not go to work, school, public places, or use public transport, ride sharing or taxis – except to get medical care</p> <p>Cover your cough or wear a mask</p> <p>Call your doctor’s office before going for an appointment</p> <p>Do not share items like cups or towels</p> <p>Clean ‘high touch’ surfaces frequently</p>
---	--