

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEOPLE UNDERGOING TESTING FOR COVID-19 AND NOT NEEDING HOSPITALIZATION

Testing for COVID-19 is important in order to isolate individuals who test positive. This reduces the spread of the virus in the community. If you are being tested you should expect follow-up communication regarding your test results within the next 24 to 48 hours. For your safety and the safety of others, we strongly recommend you remain at home in isolation until receiving further instructions. When you receive your test result you will be instructed regarding if you need to remain in isolation at your home/residence and if so for how long.

The following instructions are provided to assist you in safely caring for yourself or others who are infected or potentially infected with COVID-19. As part of the testing, your health care provider will evaluate whether you can be safely cared for at home. If it is determined that you do not need to be hospitalized and can be isolated at home you should follow the prevention steps below. Your healthcare provider will notify you regarding the results when they become available. The results will determine what is recommended and how long you should remain at home.

Test Results

If your test results are negative, your provider will instruct you on how long you should remain at home. Generally, you should follow the instructions below for at least 3 days (72 hours) after symptoms go away (fever resolved without fever-reducing medications and improvement in breathing symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath).

If your test results are positive or you were not tested but are presumed to have COVID-19 you should remain in self-isolation at home/residence until you meet the criteria listed below.

If you are immunocompromised (active cancer, bone marrow transplant, organ transplant, poorly controlled HIV, use of high dose steroids) you should talk to your provider about when you can leave isolation at home/residence.

If you work in a setting with people who are at higher risk (healthcare worker, long term care, etc.) you should talk to your workplace about when you can return to work.

Instructions for Self-isolation

Self-isolation means staying at home, limiting unnecessary contact, and paying attention to symptoms such as fevers and breathing difficulty. Fevers and cough are expected and generally can be managed at home; however, you should call a healthcare provider if you have symptoms such as:

- Increased trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not fully complete. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Be aware, many patients do not have severe symptoms. However, if you develop these symptoms, contact your provider for further instructions. Please refer to your provider's instructions as your primary resource.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home/residence, except for getting medical care. Under no circumstance should you go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

- **People:** As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Animals:** You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while you are sick with COVID-19, just like you would around other people. Although there have not been reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19, it is still recommended that people with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus. When possible, have another member of your household care for your animals while you are sick. If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wash your hands before and after you interact with pets and wear a facemask.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the health care provider prior to your appointment and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the health care provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Wear a facemask

If you are sick, you should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets, and before you enter a health care provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask because it causes trouble breathing, people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trashcan.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all high-touch surfaces everyday

Clean all high-touch surfaces daily. High-touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Monitor your symptoms

If you begin to develop symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, trouble breathing) please contact your care provider as soon as possible. Before seeking care, call your health care provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If you are directed to seek care, be sure to put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the health care provider's office keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

When can you to discontinue home isolation

Some people can leave home isolation when they improve while others will need a test before being allowed to leave home isolation. Testing is generally reserved for those persons with very impaired immune systems and your doctor will tell you if this needs to be done.

- People **testing positive for COVID-19, or presumed to be positive for COVID-19** and who do NOT need a test to confirm clearance can stop home isolation if the following three conditions are met:

- You have had no fever for at least 5 days (that is a five full days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) AND
- Your cough, trouble breathing and other symptoms have improved) AND
- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared

In summary, you should remain isolated at home for at least 10 days after your symptoms began and at least 5 days after they started to improve, whichever is longer. For example if you became ill on March 15 you should remain on home quarantine until at least March 26. Additionally, your fever should have been resolved without medication for at least 5 days and any respiratory symptoms should have been improving for at least 5 days before you leave isolation at your home/residence.

- Those who DO need to be tested before leaving home isolation should talk with their physician and make a plan after they improve.

In all cases, **follow the guidance of your healthcare provider and local health department.** The decision to stop home isolation should be made with the assistance of your healthcare provider who may consult with state and local health departments. Decisions on duration of home contact may change as more information is learned about the disease.

Please review the following websites for more information:

Nebraska Medicine website: <https://www.nebraskamed.com/patients/covid19>

This website contains information on how to protect yourself and others, provides answers to common questions and other resources for further information regarding COVID-19.