

COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to help you keep you and your family safe

Q What is the novel coronavirus?

A The 2019 novel coronavirus, or COVID-19, is a new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, China. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Q How does COVID-19 spread?

A Currently, COVID-19 is believed to spread when people come into contact with droplets from the nose or mouth of someone with COVID-19. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people then touch these surfaces and then their face, putting them at risk for catching COVID-19. People can also breath-in these droplets if they are very close to someone with COVID-19. This is why it's important to wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and stay more than 6 feet away from a person who is sick.

Q What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

A The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. These symptoms are very similar to the flu and common cold. Some people do not have any symptoms.

Those at higher risk are more likely to develop serious illness. Most people recover without needing special medical treatment.

Q Who is at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19?

A Not everyone who gets COVID-19 will become very sick. Currently, older adults and those who have serious chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and may need hospitalization.

Serious chronic medical conditions may include heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease. People who have weakened immune systems like patients receiving chemotherapy, radiation, or have recently had a transplant, may also be at higher risk.

Q Is UI Health prepared to respond to suspected or confirmed COVID-19 patients?

A Yes, UI Health is prepared to safely care for any patient suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 and to minimize the risk of exposure to other patients, visitors, staff and the surrounding community. All patients at UI Health are screened for recent travel and symptoms, based on the latest guidelines from public health officials. All health care providers who interact with patients suspected or confirmed to have novel coronavirus are proactively monitored and protected.

Q If I think I have been exposed to COVID-19, what should I do?

A Before coming in for your visit or the emergency department, **call UI Health at 866-600-CARE** to consult with a health care professional about what you should do if you are having symptoms that include fever, cough or shortness of breath. You will be asked some questions about travel history and symptoms when you call and provided with personalized guidance.

If you have questions about COVID-19, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health hotline at 1-800-889-3931 or email: dph.sick@illinois.gov.

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Q Can I get tested for COVID-19?

A Currently testing is performed with approval of the Department of Health for patients with fever and/or respiratory symptoms (e.g. cough or shortness of breath) who have traveled from areas of COVID-19 activity, have been in contact with a confirmed case, or meet other requirements as defined by the Department of Health. In addition, patients hospitalized with severe pneumonia without a known cause may be tested.

Q How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

A The most important steps to take are the same for every cold and flu season:

- Get a flu shot if you have not gotten it yet.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze—remember to wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid close contact with sick people. If you are sick, stay home from school or work for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.

Q What additional precautions can I take?

A Experts say people should plan, not panic. Additional steps you can take to plan ahead, include:

- Practice social distancing, which means staying 6 feet away from others in all settings
- Contact your health care provider or mail order pharmacy for an additional supply of medications.
- Have over the counter medicines and supplies (like tissues) to treat fever and other symptoms at home.

- Have enough household items and groceries on hand to stay at home for a period of time
 - However, during the Governor’s “Shelter in Place” order grocery stores will remain open and hoarding of food and supplies is discouraged.
- Plan how you will take care of sick family members. Make plans for childcare if you are sick or if your child is sick. Have a thermometer at home so you can check for fever if you or a loved one feels ill.
- Stay informed – check the CDC site regularly for new updates at cdc.gov/covid19.

Q Where can I learn more?

A Visit covid19.uihealth.care for more information about UI Health’s response to COVID-19.

If you need to speak with a health care professional about your health or an upcoming appointment, please call **866-600-CARE**.

The Chicago Department of Public Health is also providing resources to residents and the public at Chicago.gov/covid19.

For general questions about COVID-19, call the Illinois Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 hotline at **800-889-3931** or email at dph.sick@illinois.gov.

You can visit the Centers for Disease Control at cdc.gov/covid19.