



COVID-19

novel coronavirus

COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is a novel coronavirus?

A: A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus discovered in 2019. The virus causing COVID-19 is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulates among humans and causes mild illness like the common cold.

Q: Who is at highest-risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19?

A: Because COVID-19 is a new disease, there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe illness. Based on what we currently know, those at highest risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include: people 65 years and older and people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility due to age of the residents, and the congregate living situation these facilities present making viruses such as COVID-19 easy to spread.

People of all ages with underlying medical conditions are also at greater risk. Those conditions include: chronic lung disease, severe asthma, heart conditions, severe obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, liver disease, and any other immune-compromising condition.

Q: What symptoms should I watch for?

A: COVID-19 affects people in a variety of ways. The most common symptoms currently are: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting and diarrhea.

Q: Are the symptoms of COVID-19 different in children than in adults?

A: No. The symptoms are similar in children and adults. COVID-19 can, however, look different in different people. For many people, being sick with COVID-19 would be a bit like having the flu. People may get a fever, cough, or have a hard time taking deep breaths. Most people who have gotten COVID-19 have mild illness. Only a small group of people who get it have more serious health problems.

Q: How can I protect myself and my family from COVID-19 infection?

A: We encourage you to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by doing the following:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Practice social distancing (keep 6 feet between yourselves and others).

- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Wear a facial covering when you cannot distance yourselves from others.

Q: If I have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 but have no symptoms of illness, what do I need to do?

A: You should quarantine at home for 14 days and monitor yourself for symptoms, such as a fever of 100 degrees or more, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, loss of taste and/or smell, headache and/or diarrhea. If you become ill, contact your doctor for guidance about your care and testing. If you experience chest pain or increasing shortness of breath, call your local emergency department. If you are severely ill, call 911.

Q: I was exposed to someone with COVID-19, how soon should I get tested?

A: The incubation period (time between exposure to COVID-19 and the appearance of symptoms) for this virus is believed to be 2-14 days. If you have symptoms, there is a 70 percent chance the disease will be detected with a positive result. On average, symptoms develop 5 to 6 days after exposure but can take up to 14 days. During this time you may be contagious. It is important to remain in quarantine for 14 days. Even if you are tested and test negative, you need to remain in quarantine for the full 14 days since test is merely a snapshot in time and does not mean you won't develop the disease later in the incubation period.

Q: What type of test is being performed by the Allen County Department of Health (ACDOH)?

A: The ACDOH testing sites are collecting nasopharyngeal swabs for individuals 12 years of age or older. For clients 2 years of age to 11 years of age, the clinics are collecting anterior nasal swabs.

Both tests are sent to a State laboratory to perform the diagnostic testing using PCR (polymerase chain reaction) technology, which looks for the genetic material of the virus. This test is done to see if a client has a current infection. Most test results are available in 2-4 days.

The Department offers PCR testing only, which detects the virus' genetic material and indicates current infection at the time of the test. The Department DOES NOT offer rapid result antigen testing (which detects active virus protein) or antibody testing (which indicates a past infection from the virus).

Q: If I test positive, how will I be notified?

A: For tests conducted at a hospital or medical clinic, you may hear from the testing site first or have access to a patient portal where you can obtain your results. Positive lab results are reported to the Indiana State Department of Health by the labs who conduct the testing. The Indiana State Department of Health's Call Center then contacts people who have tested positive and completes case investigations and contact tracing. For residents of Allen County, the Allen County Department of Health will also complete the local case investigation.

For tests conducted at the Allen County Health Department's public testing sites, the results will be sent to you via text or email (whichever is chosen during registration). If you are unable to retrieve results that way, they are also available by calling the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) at 1-877-826-0011 between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Indiana State Department of Health Call Center will try to contact you via phone, text message and a letter. You can contact the ISDH Call Center at 1-877-826-0011. It is important to answer/return these calls and cooperate with the actions requested. We all work together to assist in patient contact and advising on needed safety steps.

Q: What is the difference between "quarantine" and "isolation"?

A: Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed or possibly exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. Anyone found to have COVID-19 is isolated, and anyone identified as a close/high risk contact to someone with COVID-19 (defined by the CDC as any individual within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) is put into quarantine.

Q: If I and my family are on quarantine and have a negative test, can we go back to work school?

A: No. The 14-day quarantine period is mandatory regardless of a negative test result. The current testing method only shows that the person was not infected at the exact date and time the test was collected. It does not mean the person isn't still incubating the virus and wouldn't test positive a few days later.

Q: How long do I have to remain in isolation if I test positive?

A: If you are asymptomatic (no symptoms), you must remain in isolation until 10 days have passed since the date your test was collected. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 and test positive, you must remain in isolation until you have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of medication, 10 days have passed since the onset of symptoms and you have seen an overall improvement in symptoms.

Q: Can I get COVID-19 again once I've had it?

A: Because COVID-19 is a very new virus, there is still a lot to be learned. Based on studies of other coronaviruses, it is believed there is a period of immunity after infection. However, it is not likely to be life-long immunity, and the exact time is not known. This is still being studied and more information will be released when it is available.