

Frequently Asked Questions about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this document has been updated as of March 24, 2020.

For the latest information about COVID-19 including how it spreads, prevention and treatment, and symptoms, [visit the CDC's website](#). Printable PDFs on what you need to know and what to do if you are sick are available in [multiple languages](#).

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Basics

Q: What is COVID-19?

A: COVID-19 is a virus strain, first identified in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China that has only spread in people since December 2019. Health experts are closely monitoring the situation because little is known about this new virus and it has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people.

Q: How does COVID-19 spread and what are the symptoms?

A: COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets, which means to become infected, people generally must be within six feet of someone who is contagious and come into contact with these droplets. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Symptoms of COVID-19 appear within two to 14 days after exposure and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Q: How long does it take for symptoms of COVID-19 to appear?

A: CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as two days, or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Q: How is COVID-19 treated?

A: There is currently no FDA approved medication for COVID-19. People infected with this virus should receive supportive care such as rest, fluids and fever control, to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions.

Prevention

Q: Is there a vaccine?

A: Currently, there is no vaccine available.

Q: How can I best protect myself and patients?

A: Practice the following:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 15-20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- Standard household cleansers and wipes are effective in cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- It's currently flu and respiratory disease season and CDC recommends getting vaccinated, taking [everyday preventive actions](#) to stop the spread of germs, and taking flu antivirals if prescribed.

Q: Should I wear a face mask? Will that help protect me?

A: If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. [Learn what to do if you are sick.](#)

If you are not sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Q: What if a patient coughs or sneezes at my desk while I am working?

A: Using gloved hands, wipe the surface with a Sani-Wipe or bleach wipe and allow it to air dry. Discard gloves in a trash receptacle.

Resources

Q. What resources exist for caregivers?

A: You can access our resources from the intranet for the following:

- [COVID-19 intranet site](#)
- [COVID-19 toolkit](#)
- [PPE Resources](#)

Q: What if I can't access the intranet when I'm not at work?

A: It is critical that all caregivers are able to access the information being shared whether or not they are at work or have a Cleveland Clinic issued laptop or cell phone. We designed an external website with the same content, updates and news posted to our internal COVID-19 site. Visit ClevelandClinic.org/covid19.

Q: Is there a specific hotline for caregivers in Ohio who believe they have COVID-19?

A; Yes, if you believe you have COVID-19 symptoms or have been exposed, call the Cleveland Clinic Caregiver COVID-19 Hotline at 216.445.8246 and choose Option 1.

Access and Visitor Restrictions in Ohio Locations

Q: I have an appointment at Cleveland Clinic and I am concerned about COVID-19. Should I cancel my appointment?

A: We are taking necessary precautions on behalf of our patients, visitors and caregivers.

At this time our primary care providers are reviewing patient records and encouraging all of our Ohio patients with non-essential primary care appointments scheduled to take place in the next few weeks to consider rescheduling for three months out.

For appointments that cannot be postponed, options will include [Cleveland Clinic Express Care® Online](#), phone and MyChart visits, with in-person appointments being a back-up option.

For patients who require a physical exam, in-person appointments will remain as scheduled. We are closely monitoring this evolving situation and our clinicians are meeting regularly to continue to prepare.

If you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath, or are otherwise concerned you have COVID-19, we ask that you do not come to any Cleveland Clinic facility without calling your primary care physician or speaking to a provider using a virtual visit using [Cleveland Clinic Express Care® Online](#). Patients will then be evaluated to determine if they require being seen in person or if they meet CDC guidelines for testing for COVID-19 based on symptoms, travel and exposures. If a patient meets criteria for testing, their Express Care Online provider or primary care physician will advise how to proceed with testing.

Q: What restrictions are in place for visitors going to Cleveland Clinic facilities?

A: For all locations in Ohio and Florida, we are restricting all visitors.

Exceptions will be made for the following patients:

- Pediatric patients (1 visitor)
- Labor & Delivery patients (1 visitor)
- End of life circumstances (patient's care team will discuss with their family)
- All other visitors will be asked to leave the hospital. As we continue to navigate the best ways to contain the spread of COVID-19, we understand these changes are difficult and appreciate your patience and understanding.

Outpatient visitor precautions:

- At this time, no guests or visitors are permitted to accompany adult patients, unless special assistance is required.
- Pediatric patients, elderly patients and those with special needs are permitted to bring no more than one guest. No more than two guests will be permitted per family or group.
- Visitors who are sick, have a fever, or a confirmed case of COVID-19 should not visit or accompany a patient.
- Visitors must wash their hands (or use sanitizer) before and after entering clinical areas and waiting rooms.

Q: I have an appointment at Cleveland Clinic. What do I need to bring?

A: When entering any Cleveland Clinic facility, please have your appointment reminder from email, MyChart or text message to show.

Q: I have a surgery scheduled at Cleveland Clinic, will it be canceled?

A: The Ohio Governor's office, in collaboration with the Ohio Hospital Association, announced new guidelines on postponing non-essential surgeries, a related procedures, for adult and pediatric patients. Cleveland Clinic will use these guidelines to determine which procedures and surgeries should be postponed. Patients who have non-essential procedures scheduled will be contacted by Cleveland Clinic.

Testing and Screening for COVID-19

Q: Is there an online screening tool available?

A: Yes. Cleveland Clinic has launched a free COVID-19 online screening tool to find out your risk level based on symptoms and travel.

Follow these steps:

- Visit <http://clevelandclinic.org/coronavirus>
- Click “Start your screening now”
- A questionnaire window will open
- Answer questions to receive your recommendations
- Please note: Older browsers, such as IE11 (Internet Explorer 11), will not be able to run this tool. Newer browsers will work best, including the latest releases of Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Firefox and Safari.

Q: What patients are being prioritized for testing?

A: We are prioritizing high-risk patients which includes the following categories:

- 60+ years of age or less than 3 years old
- On immunosuppressive therapy
- Cancer patients
- End-stage renal disease on dialysis
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Coronary artery disease
- Heart failure reduced ejection fraction
- Lung disease

Q: What if I am not a high-risk patient and need to receive testing?

A: For patients aged 3 - 60, who already have a Cleveland Clinic physician’s order, we are re-evaluating our ability to provide COVID-19 testing and are asking they not report to the W.O. Walker testing facility until they are contacted by Cleveland Clinic with further instructions.

Q: Do I need an appointment at the W.O Walker Building for testing?

A: Yes, patients will be tested, by appointment only from **11 a.m. to 5 p.m.** seven days a week at the W.O. Walker testing facility located at 10524 Euclid Ave. in Cleveland.

Q: How long will results from a COVID-19 test take?

A: Cleveland Clinic’s on-site testing should yield results within a week.

Q: What do I do if I have flu-like symptoms and think I have been exposed to COVID-19?

A: Based on your symptoms, do the following:

- If you’re concerned you have COVID-19, we recommend you start with a virtual visit using [Cleveland Clinic Express Care® Online](#), an [eVisit questionnaire in MyChart](#)*, or call or message your primary care physician. You will be advised what to do next.
- Call ahead before going in person to any Cleveland Clinic location.
- If you have chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, a severe headache or other potentially life-threatening problems, go to the nearest emergency department or call 911.
- For questions, Call Ohio Department of Health’s 24/7 hotline at 833.4.ASK.ODH.
- Cleveland Clinic patients call 855.697.3750.* For eVisits: Patients must be a current [MyChart](#) user and in the state of Ohio. After completing a questionnaire, Cleveland Clinic providers will review your submitted answers and evaluate your illness. If the provider suspects you may be infected with COVID-19, they will determine the most appropriate place to send you for testing, ensure you get the right care and minimize spread.

Q: Who is screening patients?

A: We are following CDC recommendations and screening is occurring in the following ways:

- Travel screening is now performed at check-in, registration and during scheduling.
- It has also been added to the outpatient rooming and inpatient admissions workflows.
- Clinicians in Emergency Departments, labor and delivery and surgical areas will continue to complete travel screenings as a part of their standard workflows.
- These questions are also asked at check-in kiosks and through MyChart's pre-check-in feature.
- In our intensive care units for patients with severe lower respiratory infections.

Preparedness

Q: How is Cleveland Clinic preparing for COVID-19?

A: We are closely monitoring this evolving situation and our clinicians are meeting regularly to continue to prepare and respond. We are following CDC guidance. Find more information about our response on the [COVID-19 page](#) on our intranet.

Q: Is Cleveland Clinic concerned about shortages of any medical supplies or medications?

A: Currently, we have adequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We also have a supply of testing swabs on hand, however, we did not anticipate the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on Italy, where the swabs are manufactured. We hope to continue to receive additional testing supplies, which will be a key part of our decision-making in the future. Cleveland Clinic is following Ohio guidelines to postpone non-essential surgeries and procedures. This supports statewide efforts to conserve hospital beds, equipment and supplies.

It is important to follow our current PPE recommendations which will change frequently and are aligned with current CDC guidelines. The most up to date information can be found under the PPE Resources on the homepage of [our intranet](#) or by clicking [HERE](#).

Q: Where can I find more information from Cleveland Clinic?

A: The latest information on COVID-19 can be found on the [CDC's website](#). [Cleveland Clinic's COVID-19 toolkit](#) will continue to be updated as the situation evolves. Refer to the toolkit and stay tuned to the [intranet](#) for additional updates. You can also visit [ClevelandClinic.org](#).

Q: Is there a hotline I can call for more information on COVID-19?

A: Cleveland Clinic has a dedicated, 24/7 COVID-19 hotline to answer your questions at [855.697.3750](tel:855.697.3750). The Ohio Department of Health also has set up a COVID-19 hotline (1-833-4-ASK-ODH) for those with questions or concerns.

Travel

For the latest information on travel information, alerts and warnings, please visit the [Coronavirus Disease 2019 Information for Travel](#) website.

Q: What travel restrictions exist for caregivers?

A: Cleveland Clinic is restricting all international and domestic business travel until further notice. Please postpone requests to book business travel until we lift this restriction.

Q: Are their current recommendations on international travel for personal reasons?

A: Yes, on March 19, 2020, the U.S. Department of State issued a Global Level 4 Health Advisory. This Level 4 advisory instructs U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel due to the global impact of COVID-19.

Q: What should I do if I traveled from a country or had a layover in a country with widespread or sustained transmission in the last 14 days?

A: If you have recently traveled from a [CDC-designated high-risk country](#), caregivers ***must*** contact Occupational Health at 216.445.8246 to be cleared to return to work.

Q: What if my family member traveled from a country or had a layover in a country with widespread or sustained transmission in the last 14 days?

A: If your family member traveled from or had a layover in a [CDC-designated high-risk country](#) in the last 14 days ***and*** feels sick with fever, cough or has difficulty breathing, please contact **Occupational Health** at 216.445.8246.

Your family member should:

- Seek medical care right away. Before they go to a doctor's office or emergency room, call ahead and tell them about their recent travel and symptoms.
- Avoid contact with others.
- Not travel while sick.
- They should cover their mouth and nose with a tissue or their sleeve (not their hands) when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 15-20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Additional State and National Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Ohio Department of Health - <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/novel-coronavirus/2019-ncov>

Florida Health - <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/2019-nCoV/index.html>

Southern Nevada Health District - <https://www.southernnevadahealthdistrict.org/coronavirus/>

Additional Global Resources:

World Health Organization - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Government of Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus.html>

Ontario – Ministry of Health - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>

Public Health England - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/wuhan-novel-coronavirus>