

WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. 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, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

HOW SHOULD A PSASP ADJUST THEIR QUERY PROCESS?

Municipalities and local EMS authorities should coordinate with state and local public health, PSAPs and other emergency call centers to determine need for modified caller queries about COVID-19. Development of these modified caller queries should be closely coordinated with an EMS medical director and informed by local, state and federal public health authorities, including the city or county health department(s), state health department(s) and CDC.

- Question callers and determine the possibility that the call concerns a person who may have signs or symptoms and risk factors for COVID-19.
 - The query process should never supersede the provision of pre-arrival instructions to the caller when immediate lifesaving interventions (e.g., CPR or the Heimlich maneuver) are indicated.
 - Dispatch should ask callers who have a fever and cough if they have traveled within the last 14 days outside of the United States or to areas affected by COVID-19. The location of travel should be entered in the CAD notes.
- Patients who meet the appropriate criteria should be evaluated and transported as a person under investigation (PUI). PSAPs and medical directors can access CDC's [PUI definitions here](#).
 - The CDC is recommending that ALL patients with signs of a respiratory infection be provided a surgical facemask, and the facemask be placed on the patient before any close contact occurs.
- Information on a possible PUI should be communicated to EMS clinicians before arrival on scene to allow use of contact, droplet and airborne personal protective equipment (PPE).
- PSAPs should utilize medical dispatch procedures that are coordinated with their EMS medical director and with the local or state public health department.
- PSAPs and EMS units that respond to ill travelers at international airports or other ports of entry to the United States should be in contact with the Chicago Quarantine Station, which has jurisdiction over all points of entry in Indiana. The Chicago Quarantine Station can be reached at 773-894-2960 (24-hour access)

The CDC [has additional guidance for PSAPs and EMS professionals online](#).



WHAT SHOULD SOMEONE DO IF EXPERIENCING SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

If you are experiencing symptoms of acute respiratory illness, follow the recommended CDC guidelines:

- **Stay at home.** Notify your supervisor of your illness. Do not go to work until you are free of fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater using an oral thermometer), signs of fever, and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing or other symptom-altering medicines.
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.**
- **Practice respiratory etiquette** (e.g., covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve).
- **Practice frequent, proper handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or with hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Perform routine environmental cleaning.** Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently-touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, countertops, work stations) with usual cleaning and disinfection products. Follow all instructions on the product label.
- **If caller needs to see a healthcare provider, call ahead and tell them that he or she may have or may have COVID-19.** This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <http://coronavirus.gov>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://coronavirus.in.gov>
- OSHA COVID-19 guidance: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/novel_coronavirus/index.html
- CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>