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Frequently Asked Questions

Updated May 28, 2020

[**Information on the Stay Healthy Order here.**](#)

What is the most important thing for Idahoans to do at this time?

- Be aware of the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic and do your part to stay current on the latest recommendations from public health officials. Frequently check this website as well as the websites for the [local public health districts](#) for the latest Idaho-specific information and follow the recommendations of local officials to the best of your ability.
- Help stop the spread of germs by wearing face coverings in public places, washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face when out in public, trying to keep a distance of at least 6 feet from people who appear to have respiratory illness, covering your cough or sneeze if you are sick, and staying home when you are sick.
- Be aware that there are other, common human coronaviruses that cause respiratory disease. These are not the same virus that causes COVID-19.

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- Follow public health travel recommendations to avoid unnecessary risk; these are available on the [CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Travel page](#).
- If you or someone you know may have been exposed to the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19, call your medical provider to determine next steps.

Should I get tested for the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

You do not need to seek medical attention for a mild respiratory illness such as a cold. However, if you have had close contact with a person with known novel coronavirus or have recently traveled to an area with ongoing spread and you develop fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider and ask for instructions about how to seek care.

At this time, the CDC doesn't recommend testing of people who do not have symptoms. Because of the limited number of tests, there is a need to preserve them for the sickest and those with the highest risk of infection.

[Find more information on testing recommendations from the Testing Task Force here.](#)

What is the process for testing novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Testing for the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is being done on a patient-by-patient basis. Epidemiologists at the state and at local public health districts are in consultation with healthcare providers and will facilitate testing at the state lab for high-risk patients. Since influenza is still widely circulating and has similar symptoms, rapid flu tests will generally be recommended to rule out flu before proceeding with coronavirus testing.

The state lab is receiving samples Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until further notice, so tests can be run as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In addition, some private regional labs are also accepting Idaho samples for testing. There may be a cost associated with this testing. Labs will report their results to the state, and those numbers will be posted on this website each day. It is normal for test results to take 2-5 days to be delivered to the healthcare provider who ordered the testing.

What are the symptoms of novel coronavirus (COVID-19)? How long do they take to appear after exposure?

Experts believe symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath and may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

What is the likelihood that I, or someone in my family, could be exposed to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

It's important to remember that most people (currently thought to be about 80 percent) infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 will have mild illness. A much smaller group of people – mostly those who are older and are medically fragile or have underlying health conditions — may have more severe illness.

When will a vaccine be available?

This will be a brand-new vaccine. Currently, federal health officials estimate that it will be about a year before a vaccine is available.

How should households with confirmed coronavirus cases handle household waste?

In order to protect sanitation workers, households with residents infected or suspected to be infected with COVID-19 should carefully and tightly enclose any waste that may be contaminated with the virus in appropriate bags, consider double-bagging the waste, and ensure that curbside containers are not overfilled so the lids can close completely. Wash your hands thoroughly after handling any COVID-19 waste. More information is available on the [Idaho DEQ COVID-19 Wastes page](#).

Can my dog or cat become sick with COVID-19?

In the U.S., a small number of pets have been found to have COVID-19. It is believed they acquired the virus from exposure to people with SARS-CoV-2 infections. Public health officials are still learning about SARS-CoV-2, but there is no evidence that pets play a role in spreading the virus in the United States. If you are sick with COVID-19, you should restrict contact with people, your pets, and other animals. If no one else can care for your pet while you are sick, you should wash your hands before and after you interact with your animal and wear a facemask or cloth face covering.

For more information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

For the USDA announcement of the first positive pets in the U.S.:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/newsroom/news/sa_by_date/sa-2020/sars-cov-2-animals

What is Idaho doing to monitor the coronavirus risk?

Idaho Public Health officials are monitoring the rapidly changing novel coronavirus situation very closely, domestically and internationally. We are working with the Governor's Office and other state agencies including the Idaho Office of Emergency Management, local public health districts, and healthcare providers around the state, as well as CDC and other states and are working to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Additionally, Gov. Brad Little has launched a new [Coronavirus Working Group](#) dedicated to supporting Idaho's public health agencies and increasing coordination and communication around the multiple aspects of the planning and response effort.

This website is the best source for Idaho-specific information about the novel coronavirus response.

If you have additional questions, please visit the [Contact Us](#) page of this website.

 Map of the USA

Questions?

Call the Idaho COVID-19 Hotline at 1-888-330-3010



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