

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): What You Need to Know

What is Coronavirus?

- 2019 novel coronavirus is a new type of coronavirus identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness (which affects breathing) called COVID-19.

What are the Symptoms of Coronavirus?

- Commonly reported symptoms include fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- Most people with COVID-19 will have mild illness like a cold, but some will have more serious illnesses like pneumonia.

How Does Coronavirus Spread?

- The virus is likely to spread from person to person between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Who is Most at Risk for Coronavirus?

- Anyone can get coronavirus. People who are at most risk for severe illness are elderly (60+) or have other health conditions such as chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes or a weakened immune system.

How Can I Protect Myself and Others from Coronavirus?

- Wash your hands vigorously and often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Wash in-between your fingers and under your nails. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- DO NOT touch your eyes, nose or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Do not shake hands. Instead, wave, elbow bump, bow, or hand over heart.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- Get the flu shot! The flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, but it reduces your chance of getting the flu, which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus. It also reduces your chances of being hospitalized or having to go to the doctor's office, hospital, or clinic that are hot spots for transmission of the virus. People 60+ should get the pneumonia vaccine for the same reasons.

What Should I do if I Feel Sick?

- **STAY HOME!** Call your doctor if you have cold or flu symptoms like coughing, shortness of breath, fever or sore throat. If you don't know the name or phone # of your doctor, call NM Department of Health for a screening and referral. **For all health questions and concerns in New Mexico, call 1-855-600-3453.** If you need interpretation help, call us.
- If you do not feel better in 24-48 hours, seek care from your doctor but alert your doctor or any health office you are coming first.
- Avoid going out in public. Do not go to school or to work until you have been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of fever reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.

The NM Department of Health (NM DOH) may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

- Call the NM DOH (1-855-600-3453) if any of the following are true:
 - You were in contact with a person know to have COVID-19
 - You have visited China, Iran, Italy, or South Korea in the last 14 days (whether or not you have symptoms)
- If you think you have COVID-19 based on your symptoms and/or the criteria above, call NM DOH to be connected to a screening nurse who will listen to your symptoms and refer you to care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.
- NM DOH staff will not ask about immigration status. Receiving health care is not a public benefit identified by the public charge test. **The USCIS will not consider testing, treatment, or preventative care (including vaccines, if a vaccine becomes available) related to COVID-19 as part of a public charge inadmissibility determination.**
- It is best to call NM DOH to be screened before going directly to the hospital to avoid overcrowding and prevent further transmission. However, do go to the hospital right away if you are having trouble breathing.

Is it Safe to Attend Large Gatherings?

- If you are sick, stay home.
- **If you are well but are able to stay home, it's best to stay home.**
- If you have chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, asthma or a weakened immune system, avoid unnecessary events and gatherings.
- Right now, the state of NM has banned mass gatherings or events that bring together **50** people or more as cancellation is an effective public health measure.
- **If you have no symptoms, it is okay to go to small events, but only if you have to. If you do go somewhere,** practice good hygiene and remain vigilant about your health. It is best to stand 6 ft. or more from people to avoid infected droplets.
- Social isolation over a long period can have negative impacts on mental health. Stay connected to people and those you love by calling, texting, FaceTime, or through lower-risk activities such as going for a walk with a few people or cooking at home with a couple people (vs. eating in a restaurant). Minor modifications to our daily activities can have a big impact.

What Should I Do Now That My Children Don't Have School for Three Weeks?

- The state of New Mexico has decided to close all schools for three weeks to try to slow down the spread of coronavirus. This is really important because there will not be enough health care if everyone gets sick at the same time so try to keep your kids at home.
- Explain to your kids that schools are closing to try to slow the spread of this virus in the wider community, but that most kids have not been getting very bad symptoms from coronavirus. This will help your kids not to worry too much.
- Free breakfast and lunches will be available at your children's schools, and there will be arrangements for delivering food for people who cannot get to the schools. There will also be childcare available. More details will be available soon. **Call 1-833-551-0518 to get help finding childcare and meals or find out the details about school meal pick-up at this website: <https://www.aps.edu/news/coronavirus/aps-identifies-89-sites-for-student-meal-pick-ups>**
- Try to make a predictable daily schedule for your kids. This helps them feel safer, more stable, and happier. Decide on a time that you will wake up your kids, have them get dressed and brush their teeth and wash their face, try to give them meals at regular times,

and try to plan activities for them like reading, doing puzzles, playing games, making art, playing music or singing, telling stories, sewing, or anything else you can think of.

- If you have internet access and a computer (or a phone or tablet), there are many online learning resources for your kids. Some good websites are:
 - Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org>
 - Bill Nye the Science Guy <https://billnye.com>
 - Code.org <https://code.org>
 - BrainPOP <https://www.brainpop.com>
 - National Geographic Kids <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com>
- If your kids can play outside without being around too many people, that can be a good way for them to use their energy. But make sure there is an adult to supervise them.
- Try not to let your kids be watching TV/using computers/playing video games all of the time. It is important for them to do things besides “screen time.”

What Else Can I Do?

- Help reduce overcrowding – try to go to the grocery store or other places you need to go at times when fewer people will be there.
- If you have family or friends who have a chronic health condition, do not visit them if you feel sick.
- Cancel all non-essential travel out of the state or country.
- Buy a little of what you need carefully, gradually and essentially. However, it is not necessary to panic and overbuy. Do have a week or two’s worth of prescription medication on hand.
- Have a friend to check in with regularly, especially if you live alone. Call each other daily (or twice daily if sick) and make plans for different scenarios (e.g. if one of you gets sick, how can the other deliver food or medications without contacting you directly).
- If you do not live alone, prepare a room and make a plan in case someone in your household becomes sick and needs to be under isolation. Think through how that person will get the things they need (e.g. medication, water, and food) without direct contact with others.
- Keep your house clean and disinfect surface areas often and regularly with disinfecting products.
- In these difficult times, remember to celebrate the good in life! It is there. Dance in your house! Read a book! Appreciate one another and be a spark for positive change.

What Should I Do about Harassment or Discrimination Related to Coronavirus?

- It is important to separate facts from fear and guard against stigma. A lot of information circulating about coronavirus on social media and some news reporting is not based in facts.
- Support your friends, neighbors and colleagues by sharing this fact sheet to counter misinformation. Obtain information from trusted sources like the NM Department of Health or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Be kind to one another and be considerate of other people’s worries! Every person and their opinion matters.
- If you are being harassed due to your race, nation of origin or other identities, call 311 to report discrimination or harassment to the Office of Civil Rights.
- If you are experiencing stress or feeling anxious, contact you can contact the Agora Crisis Center at 505-277-3031 or 855-505-4505. Agora is a confidential help line that is staffed 24/7 by paraprofessional counselors who can provide resources and connections to

behavioral health treatment in English. You can also call 1-866-HELP-1-NM or the Refugee Health Program at 505-476-3076.

Where Can I Get More Information?

- Visit the following websites for additional resources and information:
 - <http://cv.nmhealth.org/>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Call your community leaders with any questions or concerns and for interpretation help.
 - **Sara Afghani – 505-235-3204 (Dari, Pashto)**
 - **Mohammed Alkwaz – 505-235-1774 (Arabic)**
 - **Martin Ndayisenga - 505-225-4344 (Kirundi, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, French)**
 - **Margarita Galvis – 505-803-8020 (Spanish)**
 - **Norma Casas – 505-514-5273 (Spanish)**
 - **Ivette Miramontes – 505-600-1422 (Spanish)**

I Am Worried about Having Enough Money for My Family

- The state of New Mexico is making unemployment insurance (weekly payments) available to people who are laid off, unemployed, or not getting called into work in housekeeping, restaurants, and other businesses affected by coronavirus. New Mexico is waiving the requirement that unemployed people (or people who get laid off now or are not getting hours) are looking for a job. You can apply for these benefits at **NM.gov**

This fact sheet was modified from the NYC Health Department (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/index.page>) and Julie McMurry, MPH (flattenthecurve.com)