General COVID-19 FAQ

How does COVID-19 Spread?

- People can spread the COVID-19 disease to each other.
- The disease spreads by droplets or aerosols (tiny particles) from the nose and mouth when someone who is infected coughs, sneezes or exhales.
- The most common way COVID-19 spreads is through close contact. When people are close to each other, the droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people nearby. It may be possible for people to breathe the droplets into their lungs. It is important to stay at least 6 feet away from other people in public. At home, someone who is sick should stay alone and in one room as much as possible.COVID-19 can also sometimes spread through airborne transmission. This means that aerosols (small droplets or particles) can sometimes linger in the air for minutes to hours, and may be able to infect people who are further than 6 feet from the person with COVID-19 or after they have left the room.
- Airborne transmission of COVID-19 is more likely to happen in indoor spaces without good ventilation, or when the infected person was breathing heavily, like when singing or exercising.
- It is possible that COVID-19 can spread when droplets land on surfaces and objects that other people then touch, though this is not thought to be a common way that it spreads. It is important to wash your hands before you touch your mouth, nose, face, or eyes. Clean surfaces that are touched often, especially if someone in the house is sick.
- Infected people may be able to spread the disease before they have symptoms or feel sick.
- A person can also spread the disease if they have no symptoms. Research has shown that around 40-50% of people infected do not develop symptoms.

What are COVID-19 symptoms?
- Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, muscle pain, sore throat, fatigue, congestion, or loss of taste or smell.
- Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after you are exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Not everyone with COVID-19 has all of these symptoms, and some people may not have any symptoms.
- Even after recovering from COVID-19, some people may have lingering symptoms such as fatigue, cough, or joint pain. The long-term health effects are still unknown but there may be permanent damage to the heart, lungs, or other organs. This is more likely in those who had more severe illness but may also be possible even in those who had mild illness.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have questions or concerns about symptoms.

What is the definition of "close contact" with someone with COVID-19?
According to the CDC, a close contact is someone who is within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

What is the difference between isolation and quarantine?

QUARANTINE -OR- ISOLATION

Isolation

Anyone who has *tested positive* for COVID-19 will need to do so for **10 days and until they meet the release criteria.**

Quarantine

Anyone who is considered to be a *close contact* of someone with COVID-19 should **quarantine for the full 14-days**.

RELEASE CRITERIA FOR ISOLATION

If you have symptoms (symptomatic):
1. 10 days since the start date of your symptoms
2. 24 hours of no fever & not being on fever reducing medication
3. Your symptoms are improving

All 3 criteria are required to be met before you can be released from isolation.

No symptoms (asymptomatic):
Released from isolation 10 days after your COVID-19 test date.

If you experience any symptoms throughout that 10 day period, you are required to meet the release criteria for individuals experiencing symptoms.

What do I need to know after having COVID-19?
Check out the MN Dept. of Health's resource discussing what you need to know after having COVID-19: Click here

Will I be denied care by first responders if I call and say I have COVID-19?
Some people are afraid to report their symptoms because they are afraid that we will not come to their rescue. First responders will always help you, no matter what.

When you call 9-1-1, a dispatcher will ask you a few screening questions about COVID-19. We ask that you answer these questions to the best of your ability and are honest about your answers. The questions are to help us serve you in the best way possible.

What is the COVIDAware MN app?
The free COVIDaware MN app helps you to get notified if you have been near someone who tests positive for COVID-19. COVIDaware MN uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology to notify you if you have been exposed to COVID-19, so you can reduce the risk of infection for your friends, family, and neighbors, and help Minnesota slow the spread. For more information, click here.

For more on COVID-19 please read:
What to do if you have COVID-19
What to Do if You Have Had Close Contact With a Person With COVID-19