

# Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Frequently Asked Questions – March 26, 2020



There is a global outbreak of respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus, named COVID-19. Jefferson County Public Health (JCPH) is aggressively managing this outbreak in collaboration with other national, state and local partners. Our number one priority is protecting the health of our community.

***This is a rapidly evolving situation. [Click here](#) to find the most recent information from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) on case counts at the state level. [Click here](#) to view a summary of cases in Jefferson County.***

For general questions about COVID-19, community members can call CO-HELP at 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911, or email [COHELP@RMPDC.org](mailto:COHELP@RMPDC.org) for answers in English, Spanish, Mandarin and more.

## WHAT'S NEW?

- As of March 26, the [CDC reports](#) there have been 68,440 cases of COVID-19 in 54 jurisdictions in the U.S. (50 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam and U.S. Virgin Islands). There have been 994 deaths in the U.S. to date.
- There have been [1,430 cases of COVID-19](#) in Colorado.
- There have been [130 cases of COVID-19](#) in Jefferson County.
- We have had our [first deaths in the county](#) from COVID-19. As of March 26, we have had four deaths.
- On March 25, JCPH issued a Stay-at-Home Public Health Order for Jefferson County. On the evening of March 25, Gov. Polis and CDPHE issued a Stay-at-Home Order for the state of Colorado, effective March 26-April 11.
  - [JCPH rescinded its Stay-at-Home Order 20-002 effectively immediately](#) and adopted the State's Order.
  - The full state Order is [available here](#). Visit [CDPHE's website](#) for more information.
- Partners across Jefferson County will be hosting a donation drive to collect personal protective equipment (PPE) on Saturday, 3/28, from 10 a.m-4 p.m.
  - Location: West Metro Chamber of Commerce (1667 Cole Blvd. #400, Lakewood, CO 80401)
  - [Click here](#) to view a flyer for more info and a list of supplies needed.
- JCPH launched a new [data dashboard](#) to help inform in our community about cases in Jefferson County and the spread of COVID-19.
- The state just announced [2-1-1](#) as a new resource for COVID-19 support. 2-1-1 is a confidential and multilingual service connecting people to vital resources across the state.

## WHAT IS JCPH DOING?

JCPH, CDPHE and our health and medical partners, as well as the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office of Emergency Management, are aggressively responding to this outbreak. We have activated our Jefferson County Public Health Emergency Operations Plan and are using the incident command system to allow for enhanced and coordinated response efforts. The Jefferson County Emergency Operations Center is also activated.

We have been taking a proactive approach working closely with CDC, CDPHE and other partners to:

- Provide timely information about the outbreak to our community.
- Share guidance with health care providers so they know how to safely care for people with possible COVID-19 infection.
- Support local hospitals and other health and medical partners with requests for information and logistics.
- Actively refine our response and recovery plans.

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- Work with county officials, schools, businesses, law enforcement and other partners to provide guidance and refine response plans.
- Following federal guidance, work with CDPHE to assess and test suspected cases, identify people who may have been exposed to cases, and determine the need for monitoring, isolation, quarantine or other restriction of movement and activities.
- Putting guidance and Public Health Orders in place to promote social distancing and [flatten the pandemic curve](#).

## WHERE CAN I GET COMMUNITY RESOURCES?

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Jefferson County has compiled resources to help our community get essential help and services during this time. Please visit our [Jeffco Community Resources](#) page to find resources for food, housing, unemployment support, health access and more. This page will be updated regularly.

The state also just announced [2-1-1](#) as a new resource for COVID-19 support. 2-1-1 is a confidential and multilingual service connecting people to vital resources across the state.

## AM I AT RISK?

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The risk to individuals is dependent on exposure. Under current circumstances, certain people will have an increased risk of getting the infection. For example:

- People who live in or have traveled to areas where widespread community transmission is occurring.
- People who had direct close contact with someone who was confirmed to have COVID-19.

Certain people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including:

- Older people (over age 60), especially those over 80.
- People who have chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease or diabetes.
- Older people with chronic medical conditions are at the highest risk.

People at higher risk should stay at home and pay extra attention to preventive measures. Reach out to others if you need something. [Read more in this fact sheet for people at higher risk](#).

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF?

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[Follow CDPHE's Stay-at-Home Order](#).

Everyone can also protect themselves and others by practicing the following actions:

- If you're sick, always stay home and away from public places.
- Avoid close contact (at least 6 ft.) with others.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, throw the tissue away and then wash your hands.
- Avoid touching your face including your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces, like door knobs and your phone.
- Get a flu shot if you have not had yours yet.

CDC does **not** recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases. The masks are used to keep people who are sick from spreading it to others.

At this time, there is no vaccine to protect against COVID-19 and no medications approved to treat it.

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## WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK I HAVE COVID-19?

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- If you have mild symptoms, assume you have the illness, **take care of your health at home and avoid contact with others**. Call your health care provider if your illness becomes more severe, especially if you are experiencing shortness of breath. If you have a medical emergency, call 911 and tell the dispatcher your symptoms. People who are not at high risk of severe illness may not need to be evaluated in person or tested for COVID-19. **Not everyone with symptoms will be tested.**
- If you have mild symptoms, suspect you were exposed, and are either unable to get tested or waiting on test results:
  - Please stay home and [isolate](#) yourself until:
    - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine) AND
    - Other symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved AND
    - At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
- Anyone in your household you have had close contact with (within six feet for approximately 10 minutes) should [self-quarantine](#) for 14 days, even if you haven't been tested for COVID-19.

Here is guidance for [caring for yourself or someone else at home](#).

## HOW CAN I GET TESTED?

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JCPH is encouraging anyone who is experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19, whether they have been tested or not, to stay home and [isolated](#) under the assumption that they have the illness. Not everyone with symptoms will be tested.

Before you can get tested, you need an order from your health care provider. Call or email your health care provider, and tell them your symptoms. If the provider recommends you get testing or care, follow the provider's advice before going into any health facility. Ask your provider about local private lab sites where you can get tested.

- DO NOT go to an emergency room to get a test for COVID-19 unless you are having a medical emergency. For COVID-19, that means severe respiratory symptoms such as shortness of breath or breathing difficulties.
- Only call 911 or go to an emergency room if you are having a medical emergency. Tell the dispatcher your symptoms.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

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Current symptoms for patients with COVID-19 have included mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and shortness of breath. Review [CDC's site to learn more about COVID-19 symptoms](#).

## HOW SEVERE IS IT?

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Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases.

## WHAT IS COMMUNITY SPREAD?

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Community spread can mean a few different things.

- Limited person-to-person spread (or transmission) means a person in Colorado became infected from a known exposure to another person in Colorado.

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- Limited community spread (or transmission) means there are cases and outbreaks in certain communities where people became infected, and we are unable to identify the source.
- Widespread community spread (or transmission) means there are cases and outbreaks in many communities where people are spreading the virus to other people.

## WHAT CAN BUSINESSES, ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH PARTNERS DO?

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We have prepared preliminary guidance and resources for partners. Please visit our [Info for Businesses and Organizations webpage](#) for more information.

Get more preparedness guidance from [CDC](#) and [CDPHE](#).

## HOW CAN I TAKE CARE OF MY MENTAL HEALTH?

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When we watch, read or hear a lot of news about crisis situations, and especially when we are directly affected by them, we can become overwhelmed and anxious and struggle to cope. With the speed at which this situation has changed, the loss of routine and the amount of information available, it is perfectly normal to respond this way.

Every person handles these feelings differently and there are many things we can do to care for our own mental health and that of our loved ones during these difficult times, such as:

- Avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Find time to disconnect.
- Practice mindfulness and meditation. [Insight Timer](#) and [Headspace](#) are great apps to get you started.
- Find ways to connect with others in your life, such as via phone, online or outdoors with adequate social distancing.
- Help those in need, especially those who may be homebound and rely on others.
- Find an outlet, such as physical activity or creative or artistic activities.
- Talk to those around you about your feelings.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs as coping mechanisms.
- Keep regular sleep schedules.

To find additional tips, check out the following resources:

- CDC: [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)
- CDC: [Taking Care of Your Emotional Health](#)
- *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Disaster Distress Hotline*: 1-800-985-5990 or text "TalkWithUs" to 66746. People with deafness or hearing loss can use their preferred relay service to call 1-800-985-5990.
- [Colorado Crisis Services](#): 844-983-8255 or text "TALK" to 38255
- *National Suicide Prevention Line*: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text "HELLO" to 741741)

## WHY MIGHT SOMEONE BLAME OR AVOID INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS (CREATE STIGMA) BECAUSE OF COVID-19?

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People in the U.S. may be worried or anxious about friends and relatives who are living in or visiting areas where COVID-19 is spreading. Some people are worried about the disease. Fear and anxiety can lead to social stigma, for example, towards Chinese or other Asian Americans or people who were in quarantine.

Stigma is discrimination against an identifiable group of people, a place or a nation. Stigma is associated with a lack of knowledge about how COVID-19 spreads, a need to blame someone, fears about disease and death and gossip that spreads rumors and myths.

Stigma hurts everyone by creating more fear or anger towards ordinary people instead of the disease that is causing the problem.

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## HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP STOP STIGMA RELATED TO COVID-19?

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People can fight stigma and help, not hurt, others by providing social support. Counter stigma by learning and sharing facts. Communicating the facts that viruses do not target specific racial or ethnic groups and how COVID-19 actually spreads can help stop stigma.

## WHERE CAN I FIND RELIABLE INFORMATION?

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- **CDPHE:** <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>
- **CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>
- **WHO:** <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>