



COUNTY OF POLK
Health Department
www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health

Helen Eddy, Director
1907 Carpenter Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
Ph. 515.286.3798
Fax. 515.286.2033

COVID-19 Fact Sheet

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

How does COVID-19 spread?

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus spread mainly 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.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading your illness to others, you should:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze preferably with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in the trash and wash hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I think I have symptoms of COVID-19?

Call 211 and a trained medical professional discuss your symptoms and see if you need to be tested for COVID-19. The 211 medical will answer medical calls Monday – Friday from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm, to help alleviate the increased call demand on clinics and hospitals.

The 211 line should be used the same way an individual would contact their healthcare provider. The 211 line will answer questions about mild symptoms and if you need to be tested. If you have mild symptoms, call 211 and do not go to your healthcare provider or emergency room. Hospital emergency rooms and 911 should be reserved for patients who are in severe respiratory distress. If you have symptoms before and after the hours of the 211 medical phone line then call your healthcare provider.

Where do I go for COVID-19 questions and resources?

Visit the Polk County Health Department's website for up-to-date information and resources:
www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health