

COVID-19 Response and Recovery

Health Advisory No. 1

Recommendations for Keeping Alaskans Safe

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COVID-19 poses a risk to all Alaskans. Containing the virus that causes COVID-19 cannot be done through community measures alone; Alaskans must take individual responsibility to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their community. The primary ways to do this are:

- Wearing a cloth face covering/mask when in public settings and when you are around people outside your household.
- Practicing social distancing by avoiding close contact and minimizing time spent indoors with persons outside your household.
- Monitoring your health and staying at home when sick.
- Practicing good hygiene by frequently washing your hands and disinfecting high-touch surfaces in your home and workplace.

When we reduce the spread of the virus by taking these individual measures, we reduce the need for government intervention.

Wear a cloth face covering/mask

Wearing a cloth face covering is strongly recommended for all Alaskans two years of age and older, other than those with breathing problems and those who cannot remove the covering without assistance. **Face coverings protect those around you, and also offer you some protection.**

- Make sure the face covering is made with at least two layers of fabric and covers both the nose and mouth.
- When removing the face covering, avoid touching the front of the face covering
- *Wash your hands immediately* after removing the face covering and before touching anything else.
- Wash cloth face coverings in hot, soapy, water between every use.
- Be careful to avoid developing a false sense of security when using face coverings.

Practice Social Distancing: Avoid close contact with people who are not in your household

- Put at least six feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
- Remember that people infected with the virus, but who do not have any symptoms, can also spread the virus.
- Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
- Minimize time indoors with individuals outside your household even if you can maintain a distance of six feet.
- Avoid all gatherings, even small ones, with persons who are not in your household.

Monitor your health and stay home if you are sick

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, muscle and body aches, new loss of taste or smell, and other [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
 - Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
- If you develop symptoms, stay home – even if symptoms are only mild.
 - Consider providing additional protections or more intensive care for household members over 65 or with underlying health conditions.
- Get tested as soon as symptoms start, if you can, and stay away from others until your test results are back.

Practice good hygiene

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows when able.
- Use noncontact methods of greeting each other.

Additional information

If you test positive

- If you test positive, you need to isolate away from others to keep them safe. “Isolate” is the term used in association with individuals who are sick with, or have tested positive for, the virus that causes COVID-19. Isolation means staying home all the time and keeping away from household members as much as possible. More information is available on the CDC and DHSS webpages.
- For most people with no, or mild, symptoms that are improving, isolation will be for ten days since your symptoms start, or if you never have any symptoms,

ten days since you had your test. Consult with a healthcare provider or public health staff member if you have questions about how long you need to be in isolation.

- You do not need to have a negative test to be cleared from isolation.
- It is very important for people who test positive to notify anyone they may have had contact with while infectious.
- Information on what counts as a “contact” can be found on the CDC webpages.
- If you test positive and are unable to isolate safely, or need resources during your isolation period, contact your local public center.

If you have had close contact with a confirmed case

If you have close contact with a confirmed case, you need to quarantine to keep others safe. “Quarantine” is the term used in association with individuals who have been exposed to someone with the virus that causes COVID-19. Quarantine means staying home all the time and keeping away from household members as much as possible. Information on when and how to quarantine is available on the CDC and DHSS webpages.

- The preferred quarantine period is currently 14 days from the last exposure to a known case, but may be able to be shorter under certain circumstances for contacts who do not develop symptoms. Briefly, those two options apply as follows:
 - Seven-day quarantine with a molecular or antigen test <48 hours before the end of quarantine. Individuals must remain in quarantine until their test results are available.
 - Ten-day quarantine.
- There is some risk of post-quarantine transmission associated with discontinuing quarantine before 14 days. Individuals should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms for a full 14 days after their last contact with a confirmed case.

Testing guidance

- Anybody with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested.
 - A positive test within 90 days of someone’s first infection can be difficult to interpret and needs to be discussed with a medical professional.
- Some people without symptoms should also be tested, including:
 - [All close contacts of confirmed COVID-19 patients.](#)
 - Health care workers in hospitals and congregate living settings.
 - Residents in congregate living settings (see [DHSS guidance](#) for specific groups) and other high- consequence settings (e.g., people coming into remote communities from areas where COVID-19 is circulating).
 - People who may be at increased risk for infection (discuss with medical professional).

- Please note: People with a prior positive test in the past 90 days, should NOT be re-tested.
- More information can be found in the [Alaska Section of Epidemiology's testing guidance](#).

Travel considerations

- Follow [State of Alaska travel](#) and [CDC travel recommendations](#).
- Assess the risks of travel including the mode of transportation and the level of spread of the virus in the location you will be visiting.
- At-risk individuals and communities with limited health care infrastructure or high-risk populations should consider limiting all non-essential travel.

Special considerations for workplaces, schools and childcare, correctional facilities, and other community locations and events are available at

*<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html> and
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>*

This is not a mandate.

Visit the State of Alaska's COVID-19 website at coronavirus.alaska.gov for more information