What to do if you have been tested for novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Why was I tested for COVID-19?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. While COVID-19 is circulating in some communities in New York, so are other respiratory viruses with similar symptoms. Testing for COVID-19 is recommended for persons with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 and have been around someone who has COVID-19, traveled to an area with high COVID-19 activity or have a condition that may increase one's risk for a serious viral infection (e.g., age 60 years or over, are pregnant, or other medical conditions).

What should I do to keep my infection from spreading to my family and other people in the community?

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care, while awaiting your test results. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

If you test positive for COVID-19, expect to remain under mandatory home isolation precautions by your local health department for a minimum 7 days; discontinuation will be determined by the local health department.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: You should restrict contact with pets and other animals while sick. See the CDC website FAQ COVID-19 and Animals for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19. This will help the office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not be in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands as described below.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water is preferred if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). Before seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that your symptoms are consistent with COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting your infection.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

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