



What You Should Know About COVID-19

Updated **12/28/20**: BPHC will update this information as new information becomes available.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus that has not previously been seen in humans. How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads easily from person to person, through **close contact** (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. It's spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person breathes coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings. People who are infected can spread COVID-19 up to 48 hours before they have symptoms. **Many people who are infected do not have symptoms but can still spread COVID-19.**

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congested or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

What is your risk of severe illness?

Some people are considered at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. This includes:

- Older adults
- People with an underlying health conditions, including but not limited to, chronic kidney disease, COPD, weakened immune system, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, sickle cell disease

When Should you get tested?

Get tested if:

- You are experiencing COVID-like symptoms
- You are at high-risk for complications from COVID-19
- You have been in contact with someone who is infected with COVID-19
- You have traveled or been in large gatherings
- You have gathered with people who don't live in your house

Testing is widely available in the city of Boston. If you are interested in accessing **COVID-19 testing**, check out the city's testing sites here. Testing at our mobile sites is free and available to anyone, regardless of symptoms or insurance coverage.

What should you do if you're sick or think you may have COVID-19?

- Get tested!
- Stay home, except to get medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home to prevent getting them sick.
- If you must leave isolation, wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart from others, wash your hands frequently, and clean all touched surfaces.
- Even if you don't feel sick, you can spread COVID-19 to others.
- If you need to go to a health care provider's office or emergency room, call ahead to let them know you have COVID-19 and tell them your symptoms. Wear a mask.

When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention:

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Bluish lips or face
- Inability to wake or stay awake



Boston Public Health Commission | Infectious Disease Bureau

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