COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that first surfaced in late 2019. It can spread from person to person, and the risk of infection is higher in people who are in close proximity to people with COVID-19. This toolkit is designed to equip you with the resources needed to stay safe and healthy. Additional resources are available at Avera.org/COVID-19, including education on managing COVID-19 symptoms at home.

**WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS**

Symptoms may appear within 2-14 days of exposure to the virus. In the last 14 days, have you noticed these symptoms?

- Shortness of breath
- Fever over 100°F
- Cough
- New fatigue & Muscle pain
- Chills
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Congestion or runny nose

**CONTACT US BEFORE YOU VISIT.**

Visit Avera.org/covidhotline and complete the COVID-19 testing form. If you cannot access the digital form, call 1-877-AT-AVERA or your clinic.

Get guidance on symptoms 😷 People only tested if screened first

**ISOLATE YOURSELF.**

Wait for results. | Don’t share items. | Don’t share bathroom or bedroom areas.
A significant number of people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms.

People with COVID-19 who do eventually develop symptoms can transmit the virus to others 2 days before symptoms begin. The virus can spread between people who are in close contact with each other, even when someone is not having symptoms.

This is why social distancing is so key in the fight against COVID-19, and why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends people wear masks in public settings where social distancing is hard to do, for example, grocery stores. Do not wear masks with an exhalation valve.

This is especially important in areas where there is significant community-based spread.

What do I do if I get sick?

- **Stay home:** If you are sick.
- **Call ahead:** If you have symptoms of COVID-19, contact your local clinic or the COVID-19 Hotline at Avera.org/covidhotline or 1-877-AT-AVERA (1-877-282-8372). From there you will be given further directions.
- Do not go to the doctor or emergency room before you have contacted your clinic or the hotline and been given further instructions because you could be directed to a different location or asked to stay home.
- **Keep in mind,** about 80% of patients who have COVID-19 can be treated at home

Returning to work: Consistent with CDC guidelines, Avera does not retest patients so that their employer can have proof they’ve recovered from COVID-19 before returning to work. Nor does Avera provide return-to-work notes. To return to work, you must be fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication, and it must be at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms. Recovering COVID-19 patients returning to work can wear a mask to protect others from potential shedding of the virus. If you have certain underlying health conditions, you may need to wait longer than 10 days. Please follow the direction of your local health department.

What if I need to get tested?

If you are having symptoms of COVID-19, visit Avera.org/covidhotline and complete the COVID-19 testing form. If you cannot access the digital form, call 1-877-AT-AVERA or your clinic.

Avera has set up processes for testing that will limit exposure. Based on the severity of your symptoms, your provider may ask you to stay home and isolate yourself.

How do I protect myself and loved ones from COVID-19?

- 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 with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, limit close contact with others as much as possible. Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Wear a mask when around others. Masks are meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
PREVENTION OF COVID-19 SPREAD:
SOCIAL DISTANCING

LIMIT CLOSE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE

Limit in-person meetings to your direct team, and utilize Webex, phone calls and other tools when possible
Limit physical contact, including handshakes
Limit non-essential travel
Avoid crowds (especially in poorly ventilated spaces)

WASH HANDS AND AVOID TOUCHING YOUR EYES, NOSE OR MOUTH

WATCH FOR SYMPTOMS
Symptoms may appear within 2-14 days of exposure to the virus.
In the last 14 days, have you noticed these symptoms?

To prevent spread of COVID-19 illness, Avera recommends “social distancing” as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Here’s what social distancing means:

Limit close contact with people
- Limit physical contact, including handshakes.
- Avoid hugging or kissing people who are sick or showing symptoms of illness, keep your distance about 6 feet away.
- Limit in-person meetings, using phone, email and other communication tools when possible.
- Increase physical space when you are working or talking with others out in public.

Stay home if you are sick
Stay home from work, school, church or other group gatherings if you are ill with these symptoms:
- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Congestion or runny nose
- New fatigue
- New headache
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events
- Officials may ask you to modify, postpone or cancel large events for the safety and well-being of your event staff, participants and the community.
- If possible, plan alternative ways for participants to enjoy the events by television, radio or online.

Avoid crowds, especially in poorly ventilated spaces
- Your risk of exposure to respiratory viruses like COVID-19 may increase in crowded, closed-in settings with little air circulation if there are sick people in the crowd.
- Maintain at least 6 feet distance.

Reduce or limit gatherings
- Consider that now may not be the best time for parties or potlucks.
- Visiting friends and family is not recommended.

Limit non-essential travel

For the latest updates go to Avera.org/covid-19

Avera
As your partner in health care who is concerned about the well-being of all people we serve, Avera stands with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in recommending that you wear a mask anytime you are near people who aren’t living in your household.

How do masks reduce the spread of COVID-19?

• Wearing face masks has been proven to reduce transmission of COVID-19 and decrease hospitalizations and deaths.
• COVID-19 is spread by respiratory droplets, even from people with no symptoms. When you wear a mask, it blocks your exhaled respiratory droplets from reaching others, and it prevents you from inhaling the respiratory droplets of others.

Can someone be medically exempt from wearing a mask?

• The CDC recommends that children younger than 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove a face mask themselves should not wear a mask.

What happens if I don’t wear a mask?

• You are at increased risk for being infected with COVID-19 if you don’t wear a mask. If you cannot wear a mask, you should isolate at home.

Should my child wear a mask to school?

• Avera recommends that all staff and students wear face masks in school, with consideration to the student’s individual education plan (IEP), if necessary.

Are you safe if one person wears a mask and the other person doesn’t?

• When you wear a mask, you are protecting other people from your respiratory droplets, and protecting yourself from inhaling the respiratory droplets of others.
• If everyone wears a mask, COVID-19 can be reduced to controllable levels, preventing further waves of the pandemic.
Can people with no symptoms still spread COVID-19?
• Yes. 10% to 50% of people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic, but they can still spread COVID-19.

I’ve recovered from or been vaccinated for COVID-19. Do I still need to wear a mask?
• Yes. Until we learn more, it is still important to continue wearing a mask to ensure the safety of those around you.

Do you need to wear a mask outside? Or is it only necessary to wear a mask indoors?
• You should wear a mask anytime you are near people who aren’t living in your household.

Does wearing a mask reduce your oxygen levels?
• Using a face mask, even for a long period of time, has not been shown to cause carbon dioxide toxicity in healthy people.
• The CDC recommends that children younger than 2, anyone who has trouble breathing or anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove a face mask themselves should not wear a mask.

Are cloth masks enough or does it only matter if you are wearing an N-95?
• N-95 respirators are not necessary for everyday use, and can be uncomfortable and restrictive.
• N-95s are made to protect health care workers and their patients.
• Cloth or disposable masks, when worn correctly, have been shown to keep you safe, especially when you’re also practicing social distancing and frequent hand washing.

To learn more, visit Avera.org/covid-19.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Scientific Brief: Community Use of Cloth Masks to Control the Spread of SARS-CoV2: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/more masking-science-sars-cov2.html
Cloth Masks

Wearing a mask can be helpful in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Whether you have homemade ones or bought some, daily washing can help the masks keep you safer.

Additionally, masks are most beneficial for lessening mouth-hand contact.

**Cloth Masks Best Practices**

- Masks only help if they are carefully put on (donned) and taken off (doffed.)
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, every time you touch the mask. This will really help you avoid cross-contamination.
- When you’re ready to remove a mask, grab one of the ear or head loops.
- Try to avoid touching the front of the mask. Put it in your laundry to be washed – and then wash your hands.
- Wash your cloth mask after each use, or at least daily.
- Wash in hot water, but if you can’t, make sure to dry on a hot setting of your dryer.

**To Don Ear Loop Mask**

*Proper hand hygiene has been conducted before donning on mask*

1. **STEP 1**
   - Hold mask by ear loops

2. **STEP 2**
   - Slip one loop over ear

3. **STEP 3A**
   - Slip second loop over opposite ear, adjust mask to assure mouth and nose covered.

4. **STEP 3B**
   - Slip second loop over opposite ear, adjust mask to assure mouth and nose covered.

Note: Masks tend to slip less during use/talking if the lower edge of mask is aligned with jaw bone (mandible) rather than down below jaw bone.
To Don Head Loop Mask

**STEP 1**
Hold mask by grasping both head loops at edges of mask.

**STEP 2A**
Hold mask with mask facing downward, so mask is donned with chin directed into mask first.

**STEP 2B**
Hold mask with mask facing downward, so mask is donned with chin directed into mask first.

**STEP 3A**
Stretch both head loops up over crown head, and adjust loops so mask fits snugly.

**STEP 3B**
Stretch both head loops up over crown head, and adjust loops so mask fits snugly.

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**When Removing Either Mask for Re-use**

1. Remove mask by grasping ear loops or head loops; avoid touching front of mask.
2. Place mask with outer side facing down on a clean paper towel.
3. If a common area is used for securing masks between uses, write your initials or name on paper towel to designate each person’s mask.
4. Perform hand hygiene after removing.
   a. When re-donning, use care not to touch outside of mask.
   b. Perform hand hygiene after donning.

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**Wash Cloth Masks after Use**

If you wear your mask to work, place it in a plastic bag and take it home to launder.

**Wash in regular home laundry:**
- Recommended is to wash in hot water and dry OR
- Wash in cool or warm water but dry in a hot dryer
- Wash mask after each use (or daily)
How to wash your hands correctly:
- Turn on the faucet to warm water and get your hands wet.
- Turn the water off and put on soap.
- Once you have your soap, create a good lather without water for at least 20 seconds. This is often the step people skip — they wash their hands with the soap under the water when you should be lathering your hands outside of the water first.
- When lathering your hands, scrub the backs, fronts, between the fingers and under your nails. A good song to think of when trying to gauge 20 seconds is “Happy Birthday.” Sing this twice through and you should be close to 20 seconds.
- Turn the water back on and put your hands back under the water to rinse off the soap.
- The final step is BEFORE you turn off the faucet grab your paper towel and dry your hands completely. If there are no paper towels then dry your hands with the air dryer. You will then use the paper towel to shut off the faucet and open the bathroom door to exit before throwing your paper towel in the trash.
- If you don’t have a paper towel try to use your sleeve to open the door to prevent any germs that may be on the bathroom door handle from getting back onto your hands.
- In the event handwashing isn’t a possibility you can use hand sanitizer but this SHOULD NEVER be used to replace good hand-washing practices. When using hand sanitizer it should be comprised of at least 60% alcohol; rub in the hand sanitizer until your hands are dry.

You should wash your hands often, including:
- Before, during and after food preparation
- Before eating
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after performing first aid, such as bandaging a cut
- After using the toilet, changing diapers or assisting a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, animal waste or handling their food or treats
- Anytime your hands are physically dirty
- After touching garbage