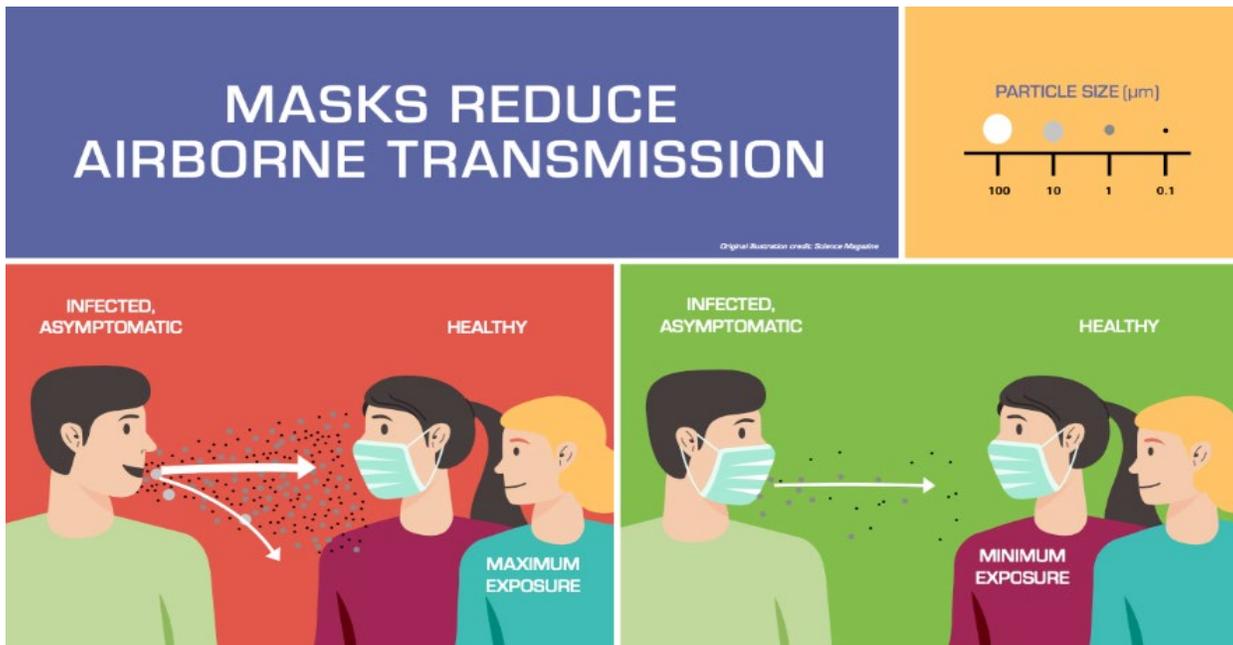


# COVID Precautions



## Wear a mask over your nose and mouth

- **Masks help prevent you from getting or spreading the virus.**
  - You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- **Everyone should wear a mask in public settings** and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- Do NOT use a mask meant for a healthcare worker. Currently, surgical masks and N95 respirators are critical supplies that should be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.
- Masks should be made of two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric and fit snugly on your face. A quick and easy test is to hold your mask up to the light. If light passes through, it's too thin. Masks only work when they cover the nose and mouth because that is where infected droplets are expelled and because the virus infects people through the mucous membranes in their nose and throat.

## Stay 6 feet away from others

- **Inside your home:** Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Outside your home:** Put 6 feet of distance between yourself and people who don't live in your household.
- COVID-19 spreads mainly among people who are within 6 feet of one another (about two arms' length) for a prolonged period (at least 15 minutes).
- Virus transmission can occur when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, which releases droplets from the mouth or nose into the air.
- People can be asymptomatic and spread the virus without knowing that they are sick, which makes it especially important to remain 6 feet away from others, whether you are inside or outside
- The more people you interact with at a gathering and the longer time you spend interacting with each, the higher your risk of becoming infected with the virus by someone who has it.
- Keep your distance especially from those that are at high risk

## Avoid crowds

- Being in crowds like in restaurants, bars, fitness centers, or movie theaters put you at higher risk for COVID-19. Although many restaurants offer outdoor dining, which experts say is the safer option, a recent CDC study showed that adults with COVID-19 infections were twice as likely to have visited a restaurant in the two weeks preceding their illness than those without an infection. The study did not distinguish

between indoor or outdoor dining, or consider adherence to social distancing and mask use. (Those with COVID-19 infections were more likely to report having dined out at places where few other people were wearing masks or socially distancing.)

## **Avoid poorly ventilated spaces**

- Avoid indoor spaces that do not offer fresh air from the outdoors as much as possible. If indoors, bring in fresh air by opening windows and doors, if possible.

## **Wash your hands often**

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds** especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **It's especially important to wash:**
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - Before touching your face
  - After using the restroom
  - After leaving a public place
  - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After handling your mask
  - After changing a diaper
  - After caring for someone sick
  - After touching animals or pets
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol**. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.
- You should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds and lather the back of your hands and scrub between all fingers, under all fingernails, and reach up to the wrist, the CDC advises. After washing, dry them completely (with an air dryer or paper towel) and avoid touching the sink, faucet, door handles, or other objects. If no soap is available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content, and rub the sanitizer on your hands until they are dry.
- Though the CDC states that the primary way the virus spreads is through close person-to-person contact, it may be possible to become infected with COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your own mouth, nose, or eyes. Therefore, you should also wash your hands after touching anything that may have been contaminated—such as a banister or door handle in a public place—and before you touch your face.
- While the virus can survive for a short period on some surfaces, it is unlikely to be spread from mail or from products or packaging, the CDC says. Likewise, the risk of infection from food (that you cook, is prepared in a restaurant, or is ordered via takeout) is considered to be very low, as is the risk from food packaging or bags. Still, there is much that is unknown about the virus, and it remains advisable to wash hands thoroughly after handling any food or products that come into your home.

## **Cover coughs and sneezes**

- **Always cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.
- **Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds**. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

## **Clean and disinfect**

- **Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily**. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them**. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- **Then, use a household disinfectant approved by CDC**

## **Monitor Your Health Daily**

- **Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.** Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- **Take your temperature** if symptoms develop.
  - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.
- **Follow CDC guidance** if symptoms develop.

## **Protect Your Health This Flu Season**

- **Healthcare systems are overwhelmed** treating both patients with flu and patients with COVID-19. This means getting a flu vaccine during 2021 is more important than ever.
- While getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19 there are many important benefits.
- Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death.
- Getting a flu vaccine can also save healthcare resources for the care of patients with COVID-19.
- While measures to prevent COVID-19, including mask-wearing, washing hands, and social distancing, can also protect against the flu, the vaccine is especially important—and safe, doctors say. The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months old and up. Talk to your doctor about finding a vaccine near you.
- Both COVID-19 and the flu can cause fever, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, muscle pain, or body aches, as well as vomiting and diarrhea (though these last two are more common in children). Meanwhile, colds may be milder than the flu and are more likely to involve a runny or stuffy nose.
- One difference, however, is that COVID-19 is associated with a loss of taste and smell.

## **So, if you or someone in your family comes down with any of these symptoms, what should you do?**

- First, you should stay away from others as much as possible and perform hand washing before you make contact with your face.
- Second getting a COVID-19 test at a testing facility near you would help to define what type of respiratory illness you have.
- Third go see a doctor or to the hospital if you have serious symptoms, such as a high fever or shortness of breath
- People who are older and have underlying medical conditions should have a low threshold to seek care for any of these symptoms.

## **Be mindful of your mental health**

Many people are experiencing anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues during the pandemic as it is a time of stress and uncertainty. All of this is normal, say mental health experts.

- Experts advise limiting exposure to news if the events of the world are too much right now.
- Practicing mindfulness (even just breathing exercises)
- Eating healthy
- Maintain sleep schedules
- Be physically active.
- Keep appointments with your mental health provider, including telehealth appointments.
- If you do not have a regular provider ask your general practitioner who they can refer you to.
- Do not let issues build to a crisis, seek help.

## **Also contact with others helps.**

- Make phone call to family and friends.
- If you have access to wi-fi and a video, use platforms like Zoom and Skype to set up visit times with others.
- Get together with friends online and play cards or games.
- Person to person contact helps raise endorphins fighting winter depression
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

## **Important Local Contacts**

- **Siouxland Community Health Center 712-252-2477**
- **Siouxland Public Health Dept. 712-279-6119**
- **My Unity Point Health Nurse 800-424-3258**
- **Mercy One Main # 712-279-2010**