The coronavirus (COVID-19)

What we know as of 3/1/20

COVID-19 is spread much like the regular flu—through coughs and sneezes that put droplets in the air and on surfaces. It may be 2–14 days after exposure before a person has symptoms. That means people can spread the virus without knowing it and many have symptoms that seem much like a cold, so they don’t think to alter their behavior.

The good news is that approximately 81% of reported cases of COVID-19 seem to have a fairly mild to moderate case similar to a cold or the flu. However, about 14% of those infected have severe case, involving pneumonia and low blood oxygen levels, and about 5% have a critical case involving respiratory failure, septic shock, or multiple organ failures.

So far it appears that a small percentage die from COVID-19 while the majority recover. Just like the seasonal flu, however, frail older adults and persons with respiratory problems, such as COPD, are hit the hardest. High risk population include those 60 years and older, immunosuppressed individuals, those with underlying chronic heart or lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes. There are more deaths in the USA from flu than from COVID-19 at this time.

Planning

As a family caregiver, plan ahead:

- Prepare to work at home. Talk to your employer about contingency plans. You may need to stay home to care for someone who is sick, or for children if schools are closed.
- Designate a separate room and bathroom for persons in the household who become sick.
- Make a list of emergency contact people (doctors, pharmacist, friends, family).
- Have enough household items and groceries on hand so that you will be prepared to stay at home for as long as 2 weeks or more.
- If the person you care for does not live with you, discuss who might monitor and call the doctor, or 911, should illness occur. Plan how he or she will get medicine, (including over-the-counter medications), food, and supplies during an illness or potential lockdown. Include pet food/supplies in your preparations. Consider mail-order delivery for medications.

“It sure helps to know how I can plan ahead. Also how to prevent getting this virus, and what to do if we do get it.”

808-599-4999

CareResource Hawaii supports older adults and their families in Hawaii. Give us a call at 808-599-4999 to find out how we can support you.
The Signs of COVID-19

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek prompt medical care if symptoms worsen, such as difficulty breathing.

Call the doctor before going to the clinic office for a visit. The doctor's office will guide you concerning the need for an office visit. You may be asked to wait in a separate area, and you should wear a mask to cover your cough. Ask about suggestions for relieving symptoms and guidelines for calling 911.

Care at home

- Follow viral prevention strategies. (See tips below.)
- Employ the doctor’s recommendations to improve breathing, reduce fevers, and ease discomfort.
- Monitor your loved one’s symptoms. If you need to call 911, tell them your concerns about COVID-19.
- Isolate the patient from others in the house. He or she should stay in a separate room, ideally with a separate bathroom.
- Wear facemasks—both you and the patient—when in the same room. Throw disposable facemasks away. Do not reuse.
- Use disposable facemasks and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient’s blood, stool, or body fluids such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine. Throw out the disposables after using them. Do not reuse.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient, such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. Wash these items thoroughly after use.
- Clean laundry thoroughly. Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Use normal detergent and set the dryer to the highest appropriate temperature.
- Place all used tissues, disposable gloves, and facemasks in a lined container. Tie off before placing in the trash.
- Isolate pets from the patient. At this time, it is not known if domestic animals can contract COVID-19.
- Place all used tissues, disposable gloves, and facemasks in a lined container. Tie off before placing in the trash.

Viral Prevention Strategies

Because there is no cure for COVID-19, your best protection is to follow these guidelines put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Avoid close contact with people who are sick (stay at least 6 feet away)

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw tissues away immediately, then wash your hands. Do not let them collect on tables or chairs around the house or at work.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, as well as after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Be sure to clean between your fingers and under your nails, the backs of your hands, as well as the palms. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, cabinet handles, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, remote controls, and bedside tables).
  - Use a household cleaning spray or wipe. Follow instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product, including precautions to take such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation while using the product.
- Facemasks
  - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
  - People who are well do not need to wear a facemask unless they are in active contact with someone who is sick.

Contact us at 808-599-4999
Be Informed

Obtain your information from reputable sources such as the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and the Hawaii State Department of Health.

Sign up for public notifications: health.hawaii.gov/news/covid-19-updates
Before traveling, review Travel Advisories and Alerts for destination(s) www.travel.state.gov/destination

COVID-19 INFO:
CALL 2-1-1
TEXT 877-275-6569
CHAT www.auw211.org
EMAIL info211@auw.org

Monday - Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

health.hawaii.gov/covid19
Coronavirus.gov