COVID-19 facts, symptoms, and prevention

This section* will answer the following questions:

*Access the other sections of this workbook by visiting: http://michmed.org/ng2Wl

For the latest, most reliable information about COVID-19, visit:

- CDC's COVID-19 page: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html
- State of Michigan's COVID-19 page: https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus
- Michigan Medicine's COVID-19 page: https://www.uofmhealth.org/covid-19-update

How to use this section

This workbook is for patients with COVID-19 and for anyone assisting in their care. This document refers to anyone who is providing care to someone during or after a hospital stay as a "caregiver." This may be the first time you find yourself in a caregiving role, or you may have been a caregiver to this person (or others) for a long time.

Downloading and printing
Printing and downloading instructions may vary depending on the Internet browser you use. Below are example instructions.

1. On your computer, click on the link to the workbook section you wish to print. This will open the document as a tab in your web browser.
2. Hover your mouse over the document. Icons will appear in the top right corner. Click on the middle icon (the underlined arrow). This will download the document as a PDF onto your computer.
3. Open your file explorer, then navigate to your "Downloads" folder. Double-click on the document name. This will open the PDF in a PDF viewer, such as Adobe Acrobat.
4. In the top-left corner of the PDF viewer, select "File," then "Print." You can also print by pressing the "P" key while holding down Ctrl (on a PC) or ⌘ Command (on a Mac). Before printing, make sure you have selected the printer you want to use.

Increasing text size
On your computer, tablet, or phone, you can zoom in or zoom out to make text and images larger or smaller.

- **Zoom Buttons:** Depending on your browser or PDF viewer, there may be buttons to zoom in and out. Press or click the plus (+) button to zoom in.
- **Pinch to Zoom:** On a smartphone or tablet, touch the PDF with your finger, then zoom by pinching two fingers in or out.

Using hyperlinks
This workbook contains hyperlinks. On your computer, tablet, or phone, you can click on a hyperlink to take you to a specific website or online resource. A hyperlink can look like text: Centers for Disease Control, or like a web address: https://www.cdc.gov/.

Using QR codes
This workbook contains **QR codes**: a type of "square barcode" that takes you to an online resource. Most phones now have built-in QR code readers or are compatible with free apps that can read QR codes. To use a QR code, open your camera app on your smartphone, hold your smartphone camera over the QR code, and click on the link that should appear on your screen.

Interactive table of contents
At the beginning of each section is a box that explains what questions the section answers. The questions are also hyperlinks. If you click on one of these hyperlinked questions, you can jump right to that section of the workbook.
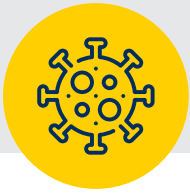
Fast facts about COVID-19[1]

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person. The virus is a spread when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or talks releasing respiratory droplets. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of nearby people. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.[2] Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. COVID-19 can be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

What are symptoms I should watch for?

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea
- Diarrhea

If you have trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, new confusion, bluish lips or face, or difficulty staying awake, get medical care immediately.

Who can get COVID-19?

Anyone can get COVID-19. People who are older or have certain pre-existing health conditions (such as diabetes and asthma) are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19.

How can I protect myself and others from COVID-19?

The three most important ways to help protect yourself and others from COVID-19 are:

1. Wear a mask over your nose and mouth
2. Stay at least 6 feet apart from others.
3. Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
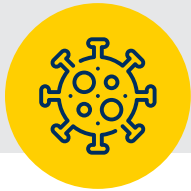
When should I get tested for COVID-19?

Consider getting tested if you feel sick, if someone close to you is sick or has symptoms, or if you work outside the home. Find a testing location in Michigan:

- Visit http://michmed.org/5L4z6
- Call the COVID-19 Hotline for the State of Michigan (888-535-6136) or Michigan Medicine (734-763-6336)

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[1]Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Things to Know about the COVID-19 Pandemic. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/need-to-know.html. Published 2020. Accessed November 19, 2020.

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. What You Should Know about COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others. Atlanta; 2020. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf.

[2]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Symptoms of Coronavirus. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html. Published 2020. Accessed November 24, 2020.

In the United States, **over 12 million total cases of COVID-19** have been confirmed and **over 250,000 people have died of COVID-19** as of November 24, 2020.[3] To prevent the spread of COVID-19, everyone should:[4]

Wash your hands often
(see how: https://youtu.be/bt2lothdWqs)

- Use 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.
- 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.

Avoid close contact

- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
- Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.

Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others
(see how: https://youtu.be/VMIrfTvcnAI)

- The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The mask is not a substitute for social distancing.

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.
- Immediately wash your hands after covering a cough or sneeze.

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.
- Use detergent or soap and water to clean and then use a household disinfectant.

Monitor your health daily

- Be alert for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.

Where can I learn about COVID-19 vaccines?

Information about vaccines is rapidly developing. For the latest, most reliable information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit:

- CDC's Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines page: http://michmed.org/9arx6
- State of Michigan's COVID-19 Vaccine page: http://michmed.org/Wnd1m

For information about Michigan Medicine vaccine trials, visit: https://www.uofmhealth.org/covid19-vaccine

[3]Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC COVID Data Tracker: Maps, charts, and data provided by the CDC. https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/. Published 2020. Accessed November 24, 2020.

[4] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. How to Protect Yourself & Others. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html. Published 2020. Accessed November 24, 2020.

What are COVID-19 symptoms I should watch for?

This chart shows common symptoms of allergies, colds, the flu, and COVID-19 to help you tell the difference between them. A checkmark means that a symptom is common. For example, not everyone with COVID-19 loses their sense of smell or taste.

It is important to note:
- **You do not need to have every symptom listed below to have that illness**
- Symptoms can be different from person to person
- Someone with COVID-19 may have no symptoms or very mild symptoms
- It is possible to have more than one of these illnesses at the same time

Symptoms/Signs	Allergies	Cold	Flu	COVID-19
Body aches		sometimes	✔	✔
Chills			✔	✔
Dry cough	✔	✔	✔	✔
Fatigue	sometimes	sometimes	✔	✔
Fever		rare	✔	✔
Headache		rare	✔	✔
Itchy eyes	✔			
New loss of taste/smell				✔
Nasal congestion/stuffy nose	✔	✔	sometimes	✔
Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea		sometimes	sometimes	✔
Runny nose	✔	✔	sometimes	✔
Sneezing	✔	✔	sometimes	
Sore throat	sometimes	✔	✔	✔
Shortness of breath	rare		sometimes	✔

Above: A chart comparing the symptoms of COVID-19 to other common illnesses.[5] This chart is not a list of all the symptoms of COVID-19. Please call your healthcare provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

If you have trouble breathing, chest pain or pressure, new confusion, bluish lips or face, or difficulty staying awake, get medical care immediately.

[5]Adapted from: Washtenaw County Health Department. Is It Allergies, a Cold, the Flu, or COVID-19? 2020. https://www.washtenaw.org/DocumentCenter/View/18663/Is-it-allergies-a-cold-the-flu-or-COVID-19_-flyer-English?bidId=. Accessed November 24, 2020.

COVID-19 risk factors

Am I at higher risk for being hospitalized with COVID-19?

Anyone can get COVID-19. However, the following groups of people may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19:

- Are aged 65 years and older
- Live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- Have chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Have serious heart conditions
- Have a weakened immune system. Many conditions can weaken the immune system, including:
  - Cancer treatment
  - Smoking
  - Bone marrow or organ transplantation
  - Immune deficiencies
  - Poorly controlled HIV or AIDS
  - Some medications
- With severe obesity (body mass index of 40 or higher)
- Have diabetes
- Are undergoing dialysis due to chronic kidney disease
- Have liver disease

Everyone should use basic infection prevention guidelines, including hand washing frequently, avoiding touching your face, staying away from people who are sick, and cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

For additional guidance for patients with specific medical conditions, visit: http://michmed.org/L1YKb

COVID-19 emergency care and research

When should I seek emergency medical care?[6]

If you have an emergency warning sign (including trouble breathing), get emergency medical care immediately. Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility:

- Tell the operator: I have or may have COVID-19.

- Put on masks before emergency personnel arrive or before going to the hospital.

Emergency warning signs* for COVID-19

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing

- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest

- New confusion

- Inability to wake or stay awake

- Bluish lips or face

*This list does not include all of the possible symptoms of COVID-19. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

If you were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or think you might have symptoms, read workbook section "Navigating COVID-19 Symptoms and Exposure."

Participate in COVID-19 research at Michigan Medicine

Michigan Medicine researchers are studying about how to prevent, diagnose and treat COVID-19.

- To learn more about Michigan Medicine COVID-19 vaccine trials, visit:
  https://www.uofmhealth.org/covid19-vaccine

- For other coronavirus-related studies at Michigan Medicine, visit:

  - Michigan Medicine's Other Coronavirus Research Studies page:
    http://michmed.org/R16ZW

  - U-M Health Research's list of coronavirus studies:
    http://michmed.org/axJnJ

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[6]Adapted from: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Symptoms of Coronavirus.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html#seek-medical-attention. Published May 13, 2020. Accessed November 11, 2020.

Notes

Help improve these materials

Please help make these materials better for other patients and caregivers.

Share your feedback here (http://michmed.org/YlvXl), or scan the QR code.

This Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement effort was reviewed under IRB-Med #HUM00190878 and determined not to require IRB approval (Not Regulated - non-research).