

What is Coronavirus-19 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person-to-person. COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that had not been previously identified.

How can I protect myself from getting COVID-19?

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing Happy Birthday) to kill germs on your hands and prevent the spread of germs to others. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol and rub into your hands for 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth because if you picked up the virus, you could infect yourself by allowing the virus to enter your body.
- Social distance yourself from others whenever possible. Try to keep a distance of six feet apart when out in public. Avoid any unnecessary outings to public places including events and other large gatherings. Stay home whenever possible.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash, or sneeze into your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Stay home when you are sick.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms can range from quite mild to severe illness. Fever, cough and shortness of breath are characteristic symptoms of infection. Symptoms have shown up as soon as two days to as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus. In more severe cases, pneumonia develops, which may make it difficult to breathe. In some cases, individuals may have the disease and be unaware. This can add risk for others whom they interact with who may have chronic health conditions or be immunocompromised.

Is Great Plains Health allowing visitors at this time?

Great Plains Health is currently limiting visitors due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The following restrictions are in place:

- Outpatient clinics and services: We are not allowing visitors to accompany patients to outpatient appointments unless the patient requires assistance. In the event the patient requires assistance, one symptom-free visitor will be allowed. This includes outpatient services, such as lab and diagnostic imaging.
- Visiting patients in the hospital: Only immediate family members of inpatients will be allowed to visit. Children 14 years and younger are not allowed at this time.

All visitors entering the hospital will be greeted by a door monitor or security personnel for a brief screening process prior to entering. They will be asked the following questions:

- Do you have a fever, cough or shortness of breath that is new to you?
- Have you traveled to any of the travel restricted areas in the last 14 days?
- Have you had contact with anyone with confirmed COVID-19 that you know of in the last 14

days?

What should I do if I suspect that I have Coronavirus-19?

Call your primary care provider and explain your symptoms. They will help you decide if you need to be tested or not.

Can someone die from COVID-19?

Yes, although most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Approximately one out of six people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people with compromised immune systems or those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, cancer or diabetes, are more likely to develop serious illness.

How would I get tested for the Coronavirus?

Currently, the criteria for testing includes; fever, cough, shortness of breath, or fever and cough, or fever and shortness of breath. High priority patients to test include: pregnancy, patients who are immunocompromised (IE: those that have a reduced ability to fight infections and other diseases, such as individuals who have cancer), exposure to someone with confirmed COVID-19, a healthcare worker, a hospitalized ICU patient or a nursing home resident.

The recommendation is to obtain a respiratory panel first to rule out other respiratory viruses. If the panel is negative and symptoms or criteria indicate, your physician together with the West Central District Health Department will determine if you meet the criteria for a COVID-19 test. Not every person that wants to be tested can. In order to ensure an adequate supply of testing and to preserve the resources for those that should be tested (defined by the CDC), testing is approved only for those people who need it.

Where can I find more information about COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has accurate and informative information at cdc.gov.

In addition, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has set up a coronavirus (COVID-19) information line that allows residents to get answers to general questions and receive information on resources available. That number is 402.552-6645; hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST, 7 days a week.

How can I get accurate and current information on confirmed cases in Nebraska?

Go to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services website at <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>. The State updates this site daily.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there are restrictions on your movements for up to two weeks. In addition, you should self-report to the West Central District Health Department. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice.

Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Daily updates on countries added to the travel restriction list are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Where did COVID-19 come from?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to

infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people.

How do I clean and sanitize right now?

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in household common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks).

Will the hospital and clinics have enough supplies to manage the COVID-19 event?

Great Plains Health has ordered as many supplies as needed for now and the foreseeable future. This week, FEMA authorized the release of the strategic national stockpile (SNS) that will infuse more medical supplies into Lincoln County.

What is Great Plains Health doing to prepare for a possible spread of COVID-19?

Great Plains Health has a pandemic plan in place (a surge plan) that has been expanded to COVID-19. We have been working closely through the Lincoln County Joint Incident Command Center and West Central District Health Department to ensure that we are getting the right information and the right testing at the right time to the people who need it most.

We are also taking precautions at our own facilities by limiting the number of people coming through our doors, ensuring proper protection of our patients, employees and providers. We are embracing technology such as tele-health whenever possible to limit exposure and are limiting travel and large meetings for our employees.

PLEASE NOTE: As the COVID-19 situation evolves, information and instructions may change. What is recommended today may change. Please be prepared for new and different information as the situation rolls out.