What to do if you or your partner develop new symptoms that might be COVID-19

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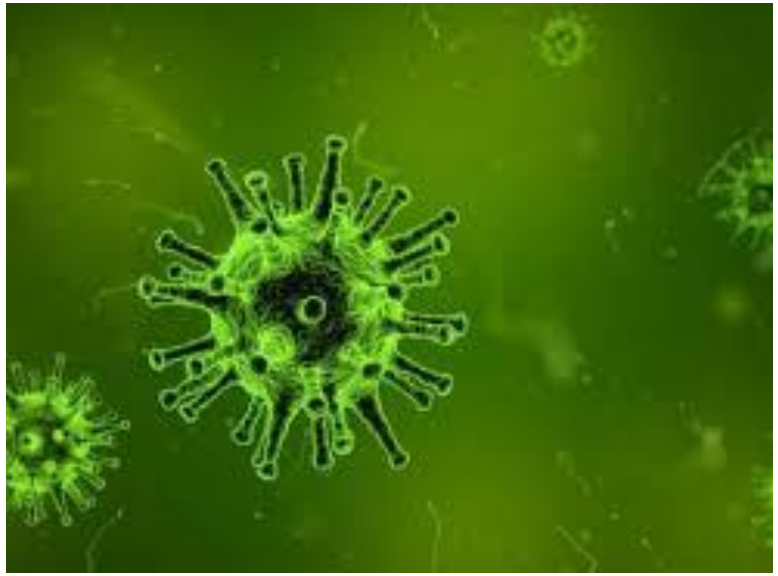
Overview

Goal: Turn fear into action; knowledge into power.

- What is COVID-19.
- How to avoid getting COVID-19.
- How to avoid having complications, if you catch it.
- What to do if you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- How to take care of someone who may have COVID-19.

COVID-19 and its symptoms

- COVID-19 is a disease caused by a coronavirus, a highly contagious virus that affects the **respiratory tract** (nose, mouth, throat, windpipe and lungs).
  - COVID-19 is an “enveloped virus,” meaning it is covered in an oily membrane. **Plain soap is very effective** at disrupting the oil on surfaces, and water is effective at removing and rinsing away the virus.
- Common symptoms: (may appear **2-14 days after exposure)**
  - **Cough**
  - **Fever**
  - **Shortness of breath**
  - **Extreme fatigue**
  - Also: body aches, sore throat
- Severe symptoms:
  - **Difficulty breathing**
  - **Pneumonia**



What to know:

- **It spreads mainly via disease-carrying droplets.**
- We get infected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) when:
  - Your eyes, nose, or mouth is in contact with droplets from an infected person who coughs or sneezes.
  - We touch a contaminated object or surface with our hands and then touch our face.
- Droplets typically do not travel more than six feet
- **Most spread is from home and family transmission**
  - Close contact can occur when:
    - Someone lives in the same home as an infected person
    - Someone provides care to an infected person
    - People gather in public places and meetings.

We can avoid getting infected by:

- Wash your hands OFTEN and WELL
  - Before touching face, after cough/sneeze/blowing nose, before eating/cooking, after using toilet, before and after going to public places, before and after providing care to others.
    - Think about what you are touching.
- Avoid touching your face
  - Face masks can help with this.
- Reduce the number of people with whom you have physical contact.
- **Stay home**; take precautions when you are out.
- If caring for someone infected, have the **sick person wear a facemask** and avoid close contact with that person.

Things to know

- 80% of infected people recover without any special treatment
- People at risk of serious complications include:
  - People 65 years and older
  - People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
  - People with chronic **lung disease** or moderate to severe **asthma**
  - People who have serious **heart conditions**
  - People who are **immunocompromised**
    - **Smoking or vaping**
    - bone marrow or organ transplantation
    - immune deficiencies
    - poorly controlled HIV or AIDS
    - **prolonged use of corticosteroids**
    - **immune weakening medications (including cancer treatment)**
  - People with **severe obesity** (BMI $\geq$40)
  - People with **poorly controlled diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease.**

Things you can do that **will** make a difference and lower your risk:

- **The healthier you are going in, the easier you'll get through it.**
- **Eating a healthy diet, being physically active, managing stress, and getting enough sleep are critical to keeping your immune system strong.**
- Fine-tune any chronic conditions you have.
  - Take your medications as prescribed
  - Pay close attention to diet/exercise guidelines
- Avoid injury/inflammation to your lungs
  - Stop or cut back on smoking/vaping of tobacco or marijuana products.
  - Avoid chemical exposures.
- Have enough medications at home so you don't run out.
- Make a list of your medications (name, dose, frequency) and keep it handy just in case. Share list with your emergency contact.
- Keep a 1-2 day supply of your medications handy to bring with you in case of emergency (in case of delays)

https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2020/03/25/food-safety-nutrition-and-wellness-during-covid-19/

Things you can do to avoid complications

- Fine tune any chronic diseases you have:
  - Hypertension: check blood pressure, take your medications religiously, restrict salt as recommended, etc.
  - Liver disease: adhere as best you can to recommendations re: alcohol intake, avoid Tylenol.
  - Kidney disease/renal failure: pay attention to salt intake, fluid retention, etc.
  - Lung disease or asthma: ensure you have adequate supplies of albuterol nebulizers (puffers)
    - **If you use a steroid inhaler, ask your doctor** about possibly switching to a non-steroidal inhaler.
  - Heart condition: self-monitor, ensure you have enough medications at hand.
  - Diabetes: adhere to your diabetic diet (be compulsive!), self-monitor, and exercise. Ensure you have enough medical supplies at hand.
  - Stay well-hydrated.
  - Avoid using ibuprofen/Motrin if you can.

What to do if you think you have COVID-19 symptoms?

- **Wear a protective mask** if you are coughing or sneezing (or just feeling ill) when you are around other people.
  - Masks help prevent you from contaminating others.
  - Err on caution to protect your family/friends. Monitor your symptoms.
- **Rest**: it will help you fight the disease
- If symptoms persist/worsen (or include fever and cough), **self-isolate at home for 14 days**.
  - Limit contact with others until you have no more symptoms.
- **Drink frequently** (at least 1.5 liters / day)
  - Avoid alcohol and coffee/tea/caffeinated drinks (they dry you out)
  - Watch for signs of dehydration
    - Dry mouth/tongue
    - Infrequent or dark urine
    - Dizziness, confusion, and headaches

New York Times, 2020/03/31/opinion/coronavirus-n95-mask

If you have symptoms…protect your family

- Until you have no symptoms,
  - **Self-isolate** in a bedroom to avoid contaminating others
  - Sleep and eat meals alone in your bedroom
  - Only use 1 bathroom
  - Cover nose/mouth when sneezing/coughing, ideally with tissue. Wash hands right afterwards. Else sneeze/cough into elbow.
  - Spit into facial tissue; throw away tissues into garbage bag with a lid.
  - Do not allow visitors into the house.

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html

Sanitizing your home (be strategic)

- Coronavirus can survive about:
  - 3 hours on dry surfaces.
  - 6 days on moist surfaces.
  - 3 days on hard surfaces like metal or plastic and about 1 day on soft surfaces like cardboard.
- Clean counters, sinks, door handles, things you or others touch.
  - Use soap and water or household cleaners.
  - 1:9 bleach-water or disinfectants.
  - If you are sick, sheets towels, cloths, dishware can be washed with other's in your home using normal detergents.

Staying safe when food shopping

- The greatest risk of contracting viruses when shopping is from touching a **shopping cart** or **basket**.
- Coronaviruses can remain on hard surfaces such as steel and plastic (e.g., car door handles, building door handles, shopping cart/basket handles, elevator buttons) for up to 3 days so these are the highest risk surfaces to touch.
- Some stores may run out of hand sanitizer, so bring a pair of disposable gloves with you. Put them on before touching the shopping cart or basket.

Taking care of someone at home who has or is suspected of having COVID-19

- **Prevent the spread of germs when caring for someone who is sick.**
- For *most people*, symptoms last a few days and get better after a week.
- Have the person stay in one room, away from other people, including yourself, as much as possible.
  - If possible, have them use a separate bathroom.
  - Avoid sharing personal household items, like dishes, towels, and bedding
  - Have the patient wear a facemask when they are around people, including you.
  - It the sick person can't wear a facemask, you should wear one while in the same room with them, if facemasks are available.
  - If the sick person needs to be around others (within the home, in a vehicle, or doctor's office), they should wear a facemask.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after interacting with the sick person. 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.
- Every day, clean all surfaces that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs
  - Use household cleaning sprays or wipes according to the label instructions.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
  - If laundry is soiled, wear disposable gloves and keep the soiled items away from your body while laundering. Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
- Avoid having unnecessary visitors.
- Contact their healthcare provider or state or local health department for questions about their care.

Provide symptom treatment

- Make sure the sick person **drinks a lot of fluids** to stay hydrated and rests at home.
- Over-the-counter medicines may help with symptoms.

Taking care of someone at home who has or is suspected of having COVID-19

- Monitor the sick person for emergency warning signs
  - Have their healthcare provider's contact information on hand.
  - If they are getting sicker, call their healthcare provider.
  - For medical emergencies, call 911 and **notify the dispatch personnel that they have or are suspected to have COVID-19**.
- Warning signs include (this list is not inclusive):
  - Trouble breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Bluish lips or face

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html

A Healthy Diet Matters. Need help with food?

- **Eating healthy foods now can help you stay healthy and avoid complications.**
- Need help getting food*?
  - **Bath Food Bank** (737-9289). Open Tuesday 5-7 PM for older folks. They can deliver.
  - **Food basket COVID-19 relief effort**
    - Contact Deb Thibodeau: dthibodea@aos98schools.org or 371 9222
  - **Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program** (Brunswick): (207-725-2716)
    - To-go lunches and bread offered Monday-Friday from 11-12:30, Saturday @ 12-1:30.
    - Pre-packed Food Pantry grocery boxes; delivery service to homebound clients.
  - **Bath Salvation Army**:
    - Food pantry (for anyone in need): 443-3611
    - Social services (housing, utilities, heating assistance): 443-3611
  - **MSAD 75** food service (Topsham) is giving away meals and lunch to families with children under the age of 18. This applies to Georgetown residents. Contact Katy DiCara, M.S.A.D. No. 75 School Food Service Directorat: dicarak@link75.org.

*This list is not intended to be inclusive and may change over time.

Other Services: Sagadahoc County Community Check-In Program

WHO: Designed for those who are either:

- 65 years or older;
- have a compromised immune system;
- have a chronic illness; or are
- unable to meet their own basic needs due to disability or a lack of transportation.

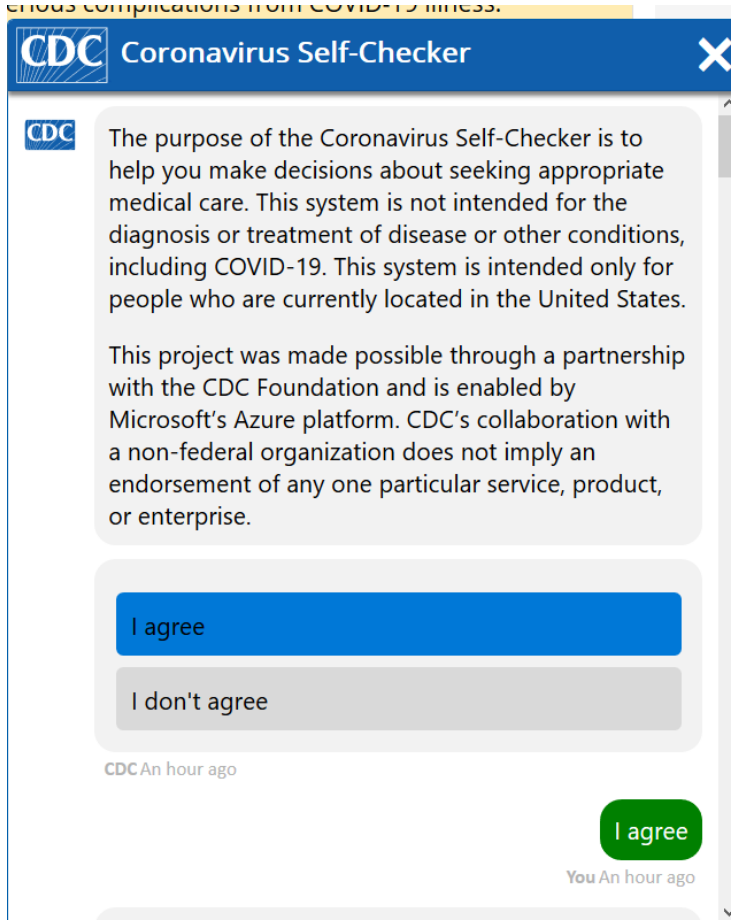
WHAT: Sagadahoc County staff will make daily check-in phone calls between 8:00 - 11:00 AM to participants who register to assess needs.

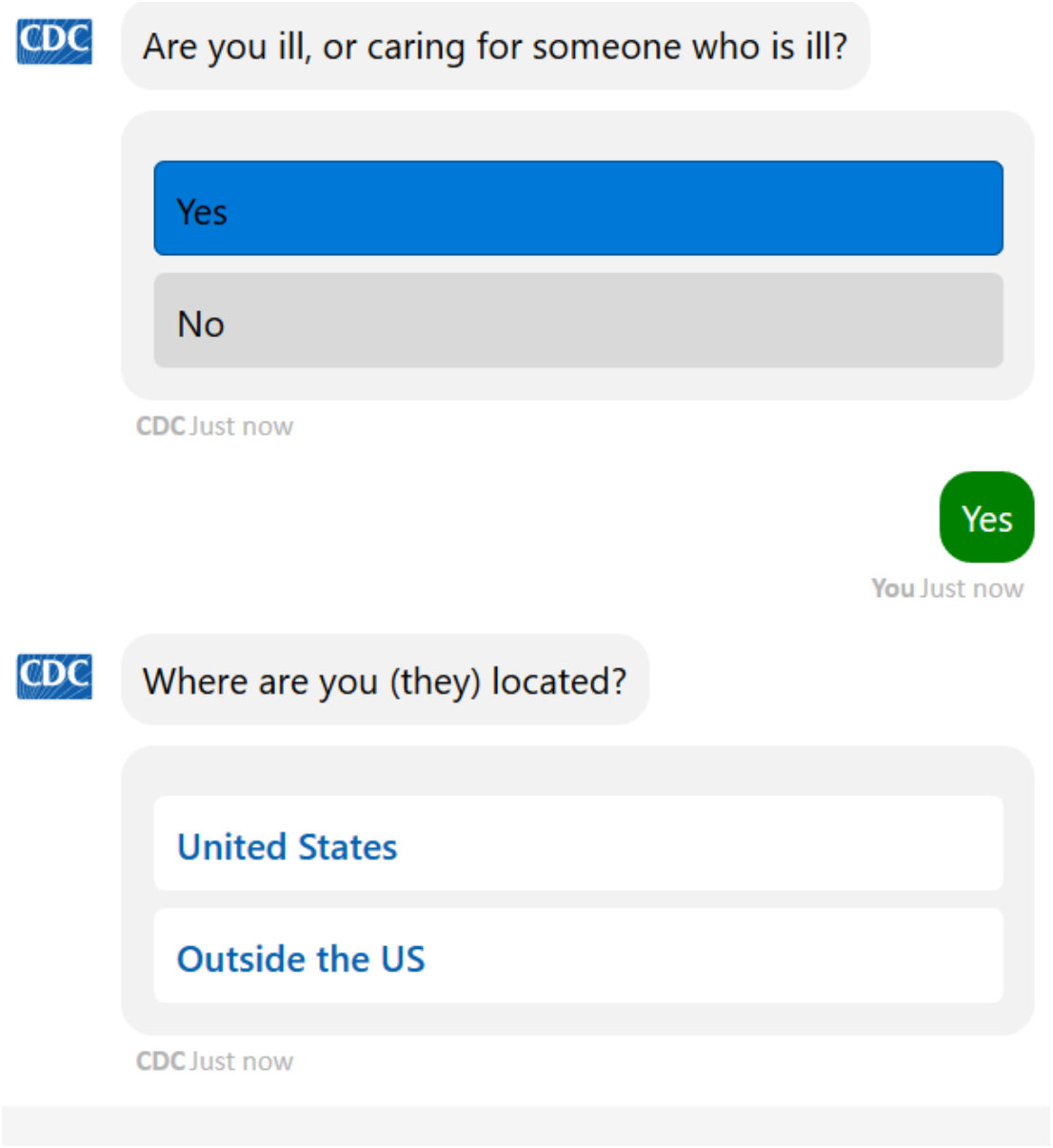
- County staff refer the individual to area community agencies, such as for free meal deliveries to the door from a local food pantry, or if needed, to 2-1-1 Maine or the Crisis Hotline.
- Program is confidential and all information will be protected.
- If a caller does not answer the daily check-in call, local law enforcement will be dispatched to conduct a well person check.

TO REGISTER: Sagadahoc County Emergency Management Agency at (207) 443-8210 or email gshaw@sagadahoccountyme.gov

Resources:

CDC.gov/coronavirus





CDC self-checker https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

To help the community

- Contribute to the Georgetown Volunteer Fire Department to help them buy critical supplies.
  - P.O. Box 199, Georgetown, ME 04548.
- Consider what you can do to help others in the community
  - Sew face masks?
  - Volunteer with food distribution?
  - Call neighbors or those who may need assistance?
  - Cash donations?
  - Other ideas?

Thank you!

Stay safe!

COVID-19 Testing Priorities

Coronavirus
COVID-19

PRIORITIES FOR TESTING PATIENTS WITH SUSPECTED COVID-19 INFECTION

COVID-19 Symptoms: Fever, Cough, and Shortness of Breath

PRIORITY 1

Ensures optimal care options for all hospitalized patients, lessen the risk of healthcare-associated infections, and maintain the integrity of the U.S. healthcare system

- Hospitalized patients
- Healthcare facility workers with symptoms

1

2

PRIORITY 2

Ensures those at highest risk of complication of infection are rapidly identified and appropriately triaged

- Patients in long-term care facilities with symptoms
- Patients 65 years of age and older with symptoms
- Patients with underlying conditions with symptoms
- First responders with symptoms

PRIORITY 3

As resources allow, test individuals in the surrounding community of rapidly increasing hospital cases to decrease community spread, and ensure health of essential workers

- Critical infrastructure workers with symptoms
- Individuals who do not meet any of the above categories with symptoms
- Healthcare facility workers and first responders
- Individuals with mild symptoms in communities experiencing high numbers of COVID-19 hospitalizations

3

NON-PRIORITY

NON-PRIORITY

- Individuals without symptoms

For more information visit: coronavirus.gov

- In Maine, testing is currently offered to patients in PRIORITY 1.
- This is because of a dire nationwide shortage of testing supplies.