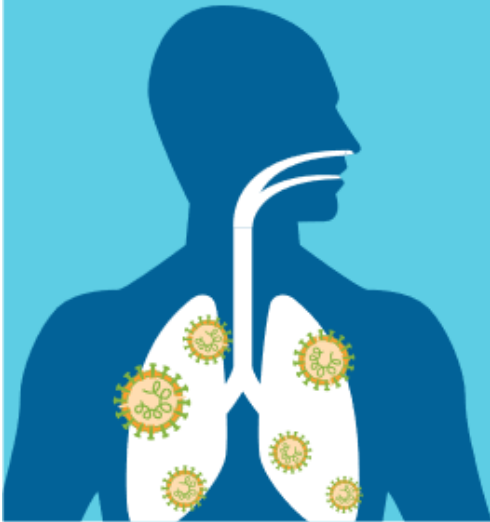


COVID-19

If you have recently traveled to an area that has COVID-19 transmission and are experiencing symptoms mentioned below, call ahead to your health care provider before seeking medical care.



What is it?

- A new respiratory virus first identified in Wuhan, China
- It has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people

How is it spread?



Through the air by coughing and sneezing



Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands



Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes

Who is at risk?



Travelers to and from certain areas are at increased risk as are the close contacts of those who are ill



Current risk to the general public is low



See travel guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html

What are the symptoms?

Illnesses can be mild, or in some cases be severe enough to require hospitalization. Symptoms of this respiratory illness primarily include:



Fever



Cough



Shortness of Breath

How is it prevented?

Similar to prevention of other respiratory illnesses, including the flu:

- **Wash hands** often
- **Avoid touching** eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- **Avoid contact** with sick people
- **Stay home** while you are sick; avoid others
- **Cover mouth/nose** with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



South Carolina
**DEPARTMENT
ON AGING**

This document is provided as a public service by the South Carolina Department on Aging. This document was created with information from the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD), Medicare.gov, and other partners. It is meant to be a tool to help raise awareness of the importance of emergency preparedness for older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers.

What resources are available to help if I have questions about the Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

- The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) has established a Care Line that can be reached from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. If you have questions about COVID-19, call 1-855-472-3432.
- The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) has opened their online care portal free of charge to all South Carolina residents. You must enter the following code at the checkout/payment screen: **COVID19**. The online portal can be accessed by visiting www.musc.care online. Based on a series of questions, the portal will determine whether you simply need access to information or if you need to speak with a health professional by phone or over the internet.
- A similar “virtual visit” is also available through Prisma Health at www.prismahealth.org/coronavirus/ and entering the following code when prompted: **COVID19**.

If I get sick, what does Medicare cover?

The CDC has identified older adults and people who have severe chronic medical conditions like heart, lung, or kidney disease at higher risk for more serious COVID-19 illness. [According to the CDC](#), early data suggest older people can be twice as likely to have serious COVID-19 illness. This is likely because as people age, their immune systems change, making it harder for their body to fight off diseases and infection. Many older adults are also more likely to have underlying health conditions that make it harder to cope with and recover from illness.

- Medicare covers the [lab tests for COVID-19](#). You pay no [out-of-pocket costs](#).
- Medicare covers all [medically necessary hospitalizations](#). This includes if you're diagnosed with COVID-19 and might otherwise have been discharged from the hospital after an inpatient stay, but instead you need to stay in the hospital under quarantine.
- At this time, there's no vaccine for COVID-19. However, if one becomes available, it will be covered by all [Medicare Prescription Drug Plans \(Part D\)](#).
- If you have a [Medicare Advantage Plan](#), you have access to these same benefits. Medicare allows these plans to waive cost-sharing for COVID-19 lab tests. Many plans offer additional telehealth benefits beyond the ones described below. Check with your plan about your coverage and costs.
- Medicare covers “virtual check-ins” so you can connect with your doctor by phone or video, or even an online patient portal, to see whether you need to come in for a visit. If you're concerned about illness and are potentially contagious, this is an easy way to remain at home and avoid exposure to others.

Besides limiting my exposure to germs, should I be cautious of anything else?

Unfortunately, scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) has identified several of them and is offering tips to protect yourself and others. These include watching for emails claiming to be from the CDC saying they have information about the virus and ignoring online offers for vaccinations. There currently are no vaccines, pills, potions, lotions, lozenges, or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure COVID-19 online or in stores. If you receive an email asking you to donate to a nonprofit that is fighting the coronavirus, make sure to research the organization first through an independent charity rating service such as Charity Navigator. Remember to get your information from official sources only, and always observe proper hygiene practices. Additionally, the CDC recommends that you: know what medications your loved one is taking and see if you can help them have extra on hand; monitor food and other medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed to create a back-up plan; stock up on non-perishable food items to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores; and if you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation, ask about the health of the other residents frequently, and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.

Are there any other helpful resources with official information?

Yes, there are several websites with an abundance of helpful information from official sources.

- South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC): www.scdhec.gov/covid19
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/covid19
- National Council on Aging (NCOA): www.ncoa.org