ECRMC COVID-19 Q&A

What is COVID-19?

What are the signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and when do they appear?
• Common symptoms include fever, runny nose, dry cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath.
• Additional symptoms might include: chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting, and abdominal pain.
• Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear 2-14 days after exposure.
• Age, health, genetics, access to quality care, and underlying conditions are key to severity of COVID-19.
• People can infect others with the virus before showing symptoms, but can be highly contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

How do you get COVID-19?
• The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads mainly from person-to-person. Research shows it can be spread not just by sneezes or coughs, but also just by talking, or possibly even just breathing.
• A person may be able to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object with the virus and then touching their own mouth, nose, or their eyes.

How is COVID-19 different from the flu and the common cold?
• First this is a new virus. That means our bodies have not seen this virus before and we are unlikely to have any antibodies that could protect us from it. This virus seems to be spreading much faster than flu, and part of that has to do with the fact that all of us are at risk. With the flu, most of us are carrying some level of antibody protection from a previous year's exposure or from a vaccine. Additionally, the case fatality rate is estimated to be 10 times higher for COVID-19 than the flu.

How infections is the virus that causes COVID-19 and how far can the virus travel in the air?
• Experts warn that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be carried by small airborne droplets (aerosols) up to 6ft., but are unclear about how dangerous they are. Cloth face coverings may help reduce spreading large airborne droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19.
• Frequent cleaning of surfaces should be one of many personal hygiene practices, including handwashing, to prevent spreading the virus. Surfaces should be sanitized with soap, disinfecting sprays, or wipes. Disinfecting of high-use surfaces is very effective for preventing illness.

How long does the virus that causes COVID-19 live on surfaces?
• When the virus that causes COVID-19 lands on a surface it starts to break down. Virus survival is depends on the type of surface material. The virus that causes COVID-19 may be able to last as long as 2-3 days on plastic and stainless steel, up to 1 day on cardboard, and up to 4 hours on copper.

Who is most at risk and how can individuals reduce their risk of COVID-19?
• Older adults and people with underlying illnesses are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.
• People who have a high Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or above, uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension are also vulnerable.
• Persons who have symptoms of COVID-19 should not visit the elderly in their homes or in nursing homes.
• COVID-19 can result in severe disease among persons of all ages even the youth.

What about pregnant women and COVID-19?
• Experts believe pregnancy does not increase risk of COVID-19 or developing severe symptoms.
• Given that this is a novel virus, little is known about its impact on pregnant women.

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Prevention

What can people do to prevent infection with COVID-19?
• Everyday basic hygiene is important to prevent infection.
• People should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water after bringing in packages, or after trips to the grocery store or other places where they may have come into contact with infected surfaces. When soap and water is not available use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
• Cloth face coverings may help reduce the spread of the virus from people who are infected, including those who do not have symptoms (asymptomatic people). These should be worn in public.
• Staying physically active is a health coping strategy for COVID-19. Make sure that when leaving the house, take steps to reduce your risk of getting or spreading COVID-19.
• Avoiding non-essential travel, especially where transmission (spreading) is widespread. People should continue to stay informed by following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. State Department travel websites for the latest information.
• Maintain social distance of 6 feet
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Public Guidelines

What should I do if I had close contact with someone with COVID-19?
• You should inform your health care provider about close contact with someone with COVID-19 and or if you notice symptoms of COVID-19. Call before you show up for care to help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others.
• You should monitor yourself for fever, dry cough, fatigue, and shortness of breath during the 10 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19.
• If seeing a health care provider is not possible, you can check with our local Public Health Department.
• Isolation and quarantine are effective control measures for COVID-19 if you receive a positive result.

Are there any restrictions on people who have recovered from a confirmed COVID-19 infection?
• Public Health Restrictions for returning to work and everyday life are based on symptoms, time, or testing.
• Scientists are still uncertain whether people who have recovered from COVID-19 can get it again (have protective immunity).
• A person recovered from COVID-19 should follow public health guidelines regarding work and everyday life.

Why do I still test positive after the required quarantine?
• Studies have shown that after isolation of patients and continues to shed detectable SARS-CoV-2 RNA (results in testing positive again) but are no longer infectious.

What are some resources for federal, state, and county guidelines?
Center for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
State of California:
https://covid19.ca.gov/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_content=coronavirushowto&utm_campaign=ca-covid19response&utm_term=how%20to%20treat%20coronavirus&gclid=EAIaIQobChMItPHaq5bf6gIVVh6tBh2lNg27EAAYASAAEgKchvD_BwE
Imperial County Public Health Department: www.icphd.org/health-information-and-resources/healthy-facts/covid-19/