Get the public health news you need.

Disease updates • Facility inspections • Health news

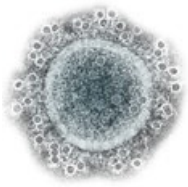
Subscribe to our e-newsletter: email address +

Optional: county of residence

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Select Language

Updated March 13, 2020



The national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) continue to closely monitor an outbreak of respiratory illnesses caused by a novel (new) coronavirus (COVID-19) that was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China.

Healthcare Professionals

Guidances and more →

For the Public

Latest information →

Community Preparedness

Planning ahead →

Testing for COVID-19 is **not** performed at county health departments. Please contact your physician or a healthcare provider.

Updates

COVID-19 Press Conference

March 12, 2020: New Guidelines and Preventive Measures

Details »

New Preventive Recommendations

March 12, 2020: MSDH has issued enhanced protective recommendations for individuals, those at higher risk, gatherings and long-term care facilities.

Details »

New Healthcare Guidance: COVID-19 Testing No Longer Requires Prior Approval from MSDH

March 11, 2020: Prior approval from MSDH for submission of samples to the Mississippi Public Health Laboratory is no longer required. See the latest testing priorities in this document.
View guidance »

New Healthcare Professionals Infection Control Guidance

March 10, 2020: This updated guidance from the CDC provides updated PPE recommendations for the care of patients with known or suspected COVID-19.
Details »

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday): **877-978-6453**

Overview

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that causes flu-like illness ranging from mild to severe, with symptoms of fever, coughing, fatigue and difficulty breathing. The CDC and MSDH are working to detect, contain and limit the spread of cases in the U.S. and Mississippi should they occur. MSDH is actively preparing doctors and hospitals on how to respond safely and effectively to COVID-19 in Mississippi.

Like the flu, COVID-19 it is thought to be spread person-to-person by close contact (within 6 feet) and by coughing or sneezing. Other possible routes of transmission, such as touching surfaces contaminated by the virus, are also being investigated.

- Questions and Answers for Mississippians About COVID-19
- Questions and Answers about Coronavirus COVID-19 CDC
- Full COVID-19 information from the CDC

COVID-19 in Mississippi and the U.S.

Cases of COVID-19 continue to be identified in U.S. states, and in some areas, person-to-person contact has been identified. This is a rapidly changing situation that is continually being monitored by the CDC and MSDH as more cases in the U.S. are expected.

The risk of infection to the general public in Mississippi remains low, but all Mississippians are advised to take health precautions to prevent the possible transmission of disease.

Mississippi presumptive cases: **3**
Presumptive cases have been identified by MSDH lab testing, but are awaiting confirmation by CDC testing.

Individuals tested by the MSDH Public Health Laboratory: **42**
as of March 12, 2020

More Information on U.S. Cases

- Coronavirus COVID-19 cases in the United States CDC

COVID-19 Testing

Last week, the MSDH Public Health Laboratory began testing samples submitted by Mississippi physicians and healthcare providers in cases where COVID-19 is a possibility. Anyone with flu-like symptoms, especially those who are older or in poor health, should see a healthcare provider as a matter of general good health. Healthcare providers can assess individual cases which may need specific testing for COVID-19. Test results are typically returned in 24-36 hours.

▸ Video: A tour through COVID-19 testing at the MSDH Public Health Lab

---

Prevention and Preparedness

For Individuals

Preventive measures against COVID-19 are the same as those for other respiratory viruses like the flu. To help prevent getting and spreading disease:

- Stay home if you are sick, and avoid close contact with anyone who is ill.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes. When possible, cough, sneeze or blow your nose into a tissue, and throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing, blowing your nose, and using the bathroom. Effective handwashing takes about 20 seconds, and includes cleaning under fingernails, between fingers, and washing the back of hands as well as the front. More proper handwashing tips »
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are touched often.
- Stay in good overall health by eating right and staying active. If you are living with diabetes, heart disease or other condition, keep in touch with your doctor and stay current with your treatment.
- During or before flu season, get a flu shot. Flu vaccination can prevent the flu or make it less severe, and decrease your chance of hospitalization and death. It also keeps you healthier and better able to fight off infections.
- If you are sick, especially with shortness of breath, cough, fever or similar flu-like symptoms, call a doctor or healthcare provider.

New recommendations as of March 12, 2020

- Avoid gatherings of 250 people or more, especially if there is evidence of transmission in your county or adjacent counties . If you do attend, remember to practice the hygiene and distancing steps above.
- To prevent illness in those most vulnerable, anyone 65 or older OR with a chronic medical condition should avoid any gathering of 250 people or more (corrected from 50 earlier).
- Avoid unnecessary (non-urgent) air, bus or train travel.
- Limit visitation to older relatives or friends (especially in nursing or care homes).
- Prepare for the possibility that schools or day care centers may temporarily close.

▸ More about preventing respiratory virus illnesses

For People at High Risk

People at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are older adults and those with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes, or lung disease. These people should take simple precautions at all times to limit their exposure to others who may be ill:

- Do not attend gatherings of more than 250 people. (Corrected from 50 earlier)
- Keep more space (6 feet if possible) between you and others as you go through the day.
- Avoid crowds. When you do go out in public, keep away from others who are sick and limit close contact.
- Wash your hands often, especially after being in public places.

If COVID-19 begins to spread locally, you should stay home as much as possible. Having a supply of important medications and basic supplies can help.

▸ Full recommendations from the CDC for people at high risk

For Long-Term Care Facilities

- MSDH recommends discontinuing group social activities.
- Consider restricting visitation until further notice.
- Post signs that discourage all nonessential visitation and discourage ill visitors from entering the facility.
- Visitors should only visit their family members and should not have contact with other residents since they could spread the virus.
- Visitors should cover their coughs and be educated on the importance of hand hygiene.
- Keep all ill visitors away from the facility for at least 48 hours after symptoms resolve.
- Consider limiting visitation by children (especially during community wide outbreaks) and the elderly or those with underlying medical problems that place them at risk.
- Postpone all groups (like school groups or church groups) from visiting facility — this goes along with discontinuing all group activities.
- Make sure the facility has plenty of hand washing products and that visitors have access to them.

Schools, Gatherings and Events

Everyone attending mass gatherings should take extra precautions at this time, including:

- Regular hand hygiene with hand sanitizer or soap and water.
- If ill, do not attend any public event and call your physician or healthcare provider if needed.
- Maintain social distancing as much as practical. A separation 6 feet from another person is considered effective for infection control.
- Schools throughout the state should consider cancelling any mass gatherings, including assembly and social events.
- The Mississippi State Department of Health is not advising the closing of schools at this time.

Correctional Facilities

- Effective immediately, the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) is temporarily suspending visitation at all facilities where MDOC are housed in order to establish sanitation and prevention protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Attorneys and essential visitors will be allowed at the facility, and the visiting area will be sanitized upon completion of each visit.
- MDOC is reinforcing common health practices based on preventive measures recommended by the MSDH and the CDC.

Event organizers: MSDH recommends that communities and organizations contact us at 877-978-6453 to determine whether cancelation is warranted, or appropriate preventive steps for your event.

In the Community

Schools, businesses, events and other places that people gather can take steps to prevent or limit the spread of viral illness.

The CDC offers preparation advice for:

- Households
- Schools and daycares
- Healthcare facilities
- The workplace, colleges, gatherings and more

- Flyer: Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission (CDC) PDF

The Mississippi Department of Education has issued guidelines for Mississippi schools concerning COVID-19.

- Department of Education COVID-19 Guidelines MDE

For Healthcare Professionals

- Healthcare Provider Guidance for Evaluation and Testing for COVID-19
- Flowchart: Identifying and reporting COVID-19 cases to MSDH
- Mississippi Specimen Collection and Shipping Guidance

- **Complete guidances and information for healthcare professionals**

What MSDH Is Doing

The Mississippi State Department of Health is aggressively responding to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation. With other state agencies, it has activated emergency operations in order to prepare for possible person-to-person transmission of COVID-19 in Mississippi.

Other steps that MSDH is taking include:

- **Surveillance:** Increasing surveillance (monitoring) activities to identify cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible and to limit person-to-person transmission.
- **Testing:** Making COVID-19 testing available for healthcare providers through the MSDH Public Health Laboratory.
- **Planning:** Working directly with hospitals and healthcare providers across the state to plan for possible cases of COVID-19, preparing them to identify and safely treat cases.
- **Readiness:** Assessing statewide hospital capacities, ensuring the capacity of the MSDH Public Health Laboratory for COVID-19 testing, and informing all Mississippi healthcare providers about procedures for identifying and testing for coronavirus cases.
- **Information:** Providing guidance to business, education and other entities on how to respond to the possible spread of COVID-19 in the community.

Coronavirus Hotline

The Mississippi State Department of Health is now operating a hotline for convenient answers to questions about COVID-19 by phone.

Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline (8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday): **877-978-6453**

Information for Travelers

Travelers Overseas: The CDC has issued Travel Warnings recommending the postponement or avoidance to countries where COVID-19 is being actively transmitted. The U.S. Department of State has also issued a Level 4: Do Not Travel advisory to China.

- CDC Guidance for Travelers
- State Department Travel Advisories

Travelers returning to the U.S.: Steps to protect health are being taken nationally for travelers returning from parts of the world affected by COVID-19, including health screenings on entry into the U.S..

- Full information for returning travelers CDC

Resources

- Handouts: Basic disease prevention and handwashing flyers for printing

Get health alerts and our free newsletter by e-mail: email address +

Last reviewed on Mar 5, 2020

error on this email page print

More topics

- Documents
- For Laboratorians
- Handouts and Posters
- Healthcare Professionals



Public Health Laboratory
RFPs/Grants
More »

Intranet
OHIT+ER Service Center
Webmail

INFORMATION

Apps
Calendar of Events
Contact Us
Meetings
Health Resources
Hotlines
Locations
News
Newsletter
Phone Numbers
Español

I NEED A ...

Birth Certificate
Certificate of Need
Children's Health Insurance
Complaint Form
Criminal History Check
Death Certificate
Divorce Record
Food Permit
Immunization Record
J-1 Visa
License Verification
Marriage Record
Professional License
Public Records Request
Wastewater Application

PUBLICATIONS

Annual Report
CON Weekly Reports
Health Facilities Directory
Mississippi Morbidity Reports
Public Health Report
State Health Plan

Strategic Plan

More »

Mississippi State Department of Health • 570 East Woodrow Wilson Dr • Jackson, MS 39216 • 866-HLTHY4U • Contact and information