

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State health department provides guidance to those with COVID-19 symptoms Including when to call health care providers and 911

DENVER, March 21, 2020: The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) asks the public to preserve critical health care resources, especially emergency medical services and personal protective equipment (PPE).

With the increased concern over COVID-19, people are calling 911 for reasons other than a medical emergency, including asking for general information about COVID-19. People should call 911 ONLY with a medical emergency.

Do not call 911 if you are seeking general medical advice or wish to be tested for COVID-19. If you have COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), consider a telehealth visit or nurseline advice before seeking in-person care. Ask your primary care provider if they offer telehealth visits, or call one of Colorado's nurselines. You can find a list of nurselines on the state health department's website: covid19.colorado.gov/telehealth-nurselines-directory. People can visit covid19.colorado.gov or call 303-389-1687 for general questions about COVID.

CDPHE is providing the following guidance to people experiencing symptoms of COVID-19:

For people with mild symptoms: Early on, symptoms may feel like a common cold, including a combination of cough, body aches, fatigue, and chest tightness.

- People who are not at high risk of severe illness may not need to be evaluated in-person or tested for COVID-19. Not everyone with symptoms or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 will be tested right away.
- If you have mild symptoms including a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or suspect that you were exposed but are not able to be immediately tested, please stay home and avoid contact with others. Isolate yourself until:
 - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that's 3 days of no fever without the use of medicine that reduces fevers) **AND**
 - other symptoms have improved (for example, when your cough or shortness of breath have improved) **AND**
 - At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
- Use over-the-counter medication to treat mild symptoms. There is currently no specific treatment for COVID-19.
- The 911 system is not intended for minor injuries or general medical questions. Do not call 911 if you are seeking general medical advice or wish to be tested for COVID-19.

For people with more serious symptoms, especially if you are experiencing shortness of breath:

- Continue to self-isolate.
- Call your health care provider if your illness becomes more severe, especially if you

are experiencing shortness of breath. Your provider may recommend you be tested for COVID-19.

- Consider a telehealth visit or nurseline advice before seeking in-person care. Ask your primary care provider if they offer telehealth visits, or call one of Colorado's nurselines. You can find a list at covid19.colorado.gov/telehealth-and-nurselines.

For people with severe symptoms: (severe shortness of breath or difficulty breathing)

- Call 911 and tell the dispatcher your symptoms.
- Do not wait for a COVID-19 test to call 911 in the event of an emergency.
- Call 911 for:
 - Symptoms of heart attack or stroke
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Choking
 - Difficulty speaking, walking, or seeing
 - Severe allergic reactions
 - Confusion, dizziness, or disorientation
 - Sudden, severe pain
- For those whose symptoms are severe enough to require hospitalization, a positive or negative test result is important to determine which unit of the hospital should oversee the patient's care. The state lab is prioritizing test results for high-risk individuals. Some Colorado hospitals have the capability or are building the capability to test for COVID-19 in-house. This will allow hospitals to test patients and have results without having to send the samples to the state lab or a private lab.
- While waiting for test results on patients who are exhibiting extreme respiratory symptoms that could be attributed to COVID-19, hospitals will follow CDC guidance to keep those patients isolated from the general population.