



March 13, 2020

First and foremost, I would like to ask that everyone pray for our country, state, county and town as we move into uncharted territory. We have learned of the potential impact at the community level, and we want to assure you that we are staying updated on the status in Mississippi and within our own community. We will continue to work closely with our partner agencies to monitor new information and share those updates with our school community. Communication is ongoing, and the situation is being monitored closely at the local level.

As of 3/12/2020, MS Department of Health is NOT recommending that schools close or that students stay home unless they are sick. That recommendation is still the same as of 3/13/20.

Basic Information and recommendations:

- The risk profile for children 18 and younger is low. Health Experts have indicated that children (18 years or younger) have only a 2% chance of exhibiting symptoms or testing positive for this virus.
- The risk profile for adults 65 and older is higher.
- Continue to follow basic hygiene recommendations for handwashing, coughing, and hand contact.
- Here is a link to the MSDH recorded news conference on 3-12-20

<https://www.facebook.com/HealthyMS/videos/218938805828101/>

Recommendations for anyone who is sick:

- A fever is 100.4 or higher (MSHD guidance)
- If you have a fever and/or flu-like symptoms, you should not go to school or work.
- If you feel that you need testing for the virus, call your healthcare provider. Do NOT just show up to the emergency room or a doctor's office.

School Assemblies and Athletic Events:

- Based on the latest guidance from MSDH, districts should adhere to the following:
 - ***Avoid any mass gatherings with 250 or more people, including school assemblies and athletic events.***
- We are not making any changes to our athletic schedules at this time except for crowd control. I am awaiting further guidance from the MHSAA, MS High School Activities Association, about athletics.

As always, we appreciate our community's support and cooperation. You can assist us by remaining vigilant but sensible in your approach to dealing with this health concern. As you know, we are the greatest influence on our children's reactions to these types of events. As a result, let's remain calm, respectful, empathetic, and inclusive while advocating for ourselves and others. Below are some resources that might be helpful.

The MS State Department of Health has an app, **MS Ready**, that contains up to date information.

Additional Coronavirus/COVID-19 Resources

MDE

www.mdek12.org/COVID19

MSDH Coronavirus page

<https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/ static/14,0,420.html>

CDC Coronavirus Situation Summary

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html>

CDC Coronavirus Cases in the U.S.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>

CDC Coronavirus FAQs

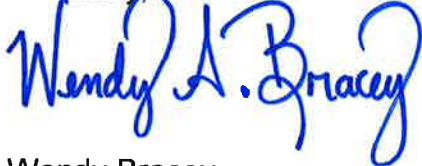
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

CDC What to Do If You Are Sick with Coronavirus Disease

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

We have a contingency plan, and we will continue to make needed adjustments to ensure the health and safety of staff and students. We will inform you of any changes. At this time we have no plans to cancel school, so we hope you will enjoy your Spring Break! Hopefully, the weather will be such that we can all get outside and enjoy some of the things we love! We look forward to seeing our staff on Monday, March 23, 2020 and our students on Tuesday, March 24, 2020.

Sincerely,



Wendy Bracey
Superintendent

What you need to know about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can people in the U.S. get COVID-19?

Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the United States. Risk of infection with COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19. Learn more about places with ongoing spread at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic>.

Have there been cases of COVID-19 in the U.S.?

Yes. The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported on January 21, 2020. The current count of cases of COVID-19 in the United States is available on CDC's webpage at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-in-us.html>.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

How can I help protect myself?

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?

If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don't go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?

There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?

There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.



If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Stay home except to get medical care

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas. Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.

Separate yourself from other people and animals in your home

People: As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Animals: Do not handle pets or other animals while sick. See [COVID-19 and Animals](#) for more information.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

If you have a medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell them that you have or may have COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected or exposed.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.

Avoid sharing personal household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, they should be washed thoroughly with soap and water.

Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate. When working with your local health department check their available hours.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

Discontinuing home isolation

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 should remain under home isolation precautions until the risk of secondary transmission to others is thought to be low. The decision to discontinue home isolation precautions should be made on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

