

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Updated 10/7/2021 at 2:30 p.m. Today's updates are in **RED on page 2, 4, 14, 15, 16 and 43**

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TROPICAL STORM IDA

How do I apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance?

Disaster Unemployment Assistance is available for Louisiana residents in 25 designated parishes. Impacted individuals can apply at louisianaworks.net

Deadline to Apply is October 4, 2021. If you already receive unemployment benefits, there is no need to apply for disaster unemployment assistance (DUA).

LA Workforce posted a FAQ here: [DUA_HURRICANE IDA_83121_WOPHONE](#)

I was scheduled to get my second COVID-19 shot right when Hurricane Ida struck. How can I receive my second shot – or how long can I wait before receiving this second dose?

It's fine if you are delayed in getting your second shot. You can do it one week later or up to a month later, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There is no maximum time between when you get the first and second doses for either vaccine.

Ideally, the second shot would be given on specific date after the first is administered. For the Pfizer shot, that's 21 days after the first. For the Moderna shot, it's 28 days. But, LDH says that if that's not possible with the storm, it's OK to do it later.

My mother/father/brother/loved one was in a nursing home that evacuated to a warehouse in Independence, LA. He/she was removed from that facility by the State and relocated somewhere else. How can I find him/her?

The Department of Health has established a Locator Helpline to assist people in finding a loved one who was evacuated to the warehouse facility. The number is 225-219-0223.

Is there an easy way to find a loved one who evacuated to a State-run shelter?

Yes. Just call 225-342-2727.

Families can also fill out a form online to reach out to loved ones who may be in state congregate shelters. That form is found at <http://www.dcfslouisiana.gov/form/dcf-connect>.

Where can I find legal assistance as a result of personal impacts from Hurricane Ida. Is that available?

Yes. The Disaster Legal Services Hotline provides free legal help to low-income disaster survivors. If you're not able to get adequate legal services for your disaster-related needs, Disaster Legal Services may be able to help. FEMA provides this service through an agreement with the Young Lawyers Division of the American Bar Association. The Disaster Legal Services Hotline is 1-844-244-7871.

Has the State opened any shelters for people with special needs ... people who need medical assistance living in their home and have to evacuate to a shelter?

Yes, a shelter for people with special medical needs has been opened. To access this shelter, you must first call the phone number below that is in your area of the state. Callers will be accessed to determine if eligible, requirements (such as getting tested for COVID). If eligible, callers will be directed to the shelter.

City	Number	Local Number
Thibodaux	800-228-9409	985-447-0879

I was referred to call 211 about oxygen/critical medical supplies. Where do I go to get those?

The Department of Health has developed a listing of oxygen dispensing sites. The list is available online in map form with addresses at: <https://arcg.is/1OaKCi0>

FEMA ASSISTANCE

I have been displaced from my home because of Hurricane Ida. Is there any help? What are the eligibility requirements?

Yes, there is help available from FEMA. The FEMA Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA) program will provide temporary housing for Louisiana residents who have been displaced by Hurricane Ida. TSA-eligible applicants must find and book their own hotel rooms. The list of participating hotels will be posted on <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or by calling the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362. For TTY, call 800-462-7585. For 711 or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362

The TSA program is for eligible survivors with a damaged dwelling address within the parishes of: Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Iberia, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, Pointe Coupee, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Washington, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana.

Participating hotels are located in these states: Louisiana, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.

How can I get a temporary (blue) roof for my home?

Residents in 14 parishes affected by Hurricane Ida can now apply to the Blue Roof Program to get a FREE temporary covering on their homes. Once the tarp is placed then your house will be classified as habitable. To sign up for the program go to bluroof.us or call 888-roof-blu (1-888-766-3258) to apply and ask questions.

Parishes eligible for the program include: Ascension, Assumption, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, and Terrebonne.

Does FEMA offer any time of monetary assistance to help people affected by Hurricane Ida?

Yes, FEMA's Critical Needs Assistance program offers a onetime payment of \$500 to eligible survivors affected by Hurricane Ida with a damaged dwelling address within the 25 DR-4611-LA federally declared parishes.

This is to help pay for life-saving and life-sustaining items to include water, food, hygiene items, fuel, prescriptions, etc. Survivors are considered eligible regardless of whether they report damage or unknown damages to their pre-disaster residence.

Applicants in DR-4611-LA who register for assistance by September 12, 2021, will be considered for CNA if all of the following apply:

- Pass FEMA's identity and occupancy verification.
- Are displaced from their pre-disaster primary residence as a result of the disaster, or they are sheltering in their pre-disaster residence and report a need to shelter elsewhere at registration.
- At registration, state they have critical needs and request financial assistance for those needs and expenses.
- Pre-disaster primary residence is located within 25 federally declared parishes.
- All high-risk fraud indicators associated with the registration are resolved.

Can FEMA help with rental assistance?

Yes. Eligible survivors may receive one month of expedited rental assistance who reported their essential utilities are temporarily unavailable and whose primary home is in one of the following parishes:

Ascension, Assumption, East Baton Rouge East Feliciana, Jefferson, Lafourche, Livingston, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Helena, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne and Washington

Can FEMA help with hotel/motel or other lodging expenses?

Yes. FEMA's Lodging Expenditure Reimbursement program provides a type of financial assistance to reimburse survivors who incurred out of pocket temporary lodging expenses due to damages that affects the habitability of their primary residence as a result of Hurricane Ida or is inaccessible (evacuations, etc.). Eligible lodging expenses may include the cost of the room and taxes charged by a hotel or other lodging provider.

What about generators and chainsaws? Is there a FEMA reimbursement program for these?

Yes, FEMA can help cover some expenses related to generator and chainsaws.

Generator Reimbursement: FEMA has now waived the following requirements for survivors:

- The generator must've been purchased or rented to power a medically required piece of equipment, including medically required refrigerators.
- The applicant must submit a statement from a medical services provider, indicating the equipment is medically necessary.
- The generator must have been purchased by Sept. 25, 2021 which is 30 days after the August 26, 2021 incident period start date. FEMA has also increased the award amount for generators to \$800.

Chainsaw Reimbursement: FEMA has now increased the award amount for chainsaws to \$250 based on the average cost to purchase a medium to large gas-powered chainsaw with a minimum of a 16-inch bar to clear disaster debris such as fallen trees.

I heard there is a FEMA program that pays survivors \$8,500. How can I apply?

No. This is a SCAM. Do not trust text messages or emails that ask you for personal information and always verify the source of the information. FEMA will never ask for your personal information over text message or email.

To ensure you are sharing information securely with FEMA, visit <http://DisasterAssistance.gov> or call FEMA at 1-800-621-3362. Other official methods of contacting us can be found on DisasterAssistance.gov as well.

What about small business loans?

The Small Business Administration provides federal, low-interest loans to businesses, homeowners and renters to make repairs not covered by insurance or FEMA. www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance
SBA Customer Service Center:

- Phone: 800-659-2955
- hard-of-hearing can call 800-877-8339
- Email at DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov

UPDATED STATE MITIGATION GUIDANCE (September 28, 2021)

What is the current state guidance to limit the spread of COVID-19?

The information below is the most up-to-date guidance for addressing the COVID-19 pandemic in Louisiana. The updated guidance addresses a recent and sharp increase in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations associated with the delta variant. The guidance is for all residents regardless of vaccination status. This updated guidance includes:

- Beginning August 4, 2021, all people ages 5 and above - vaccinated and unvaccinated – are mandated to wear face masks while indoors.
- **The temporary indoor statewide mask mandate has been extended until October 27. It may be extended again if necessary.**
- This also applies to K-12 schools, universities, and other higher education institutions, which return to on-campus learning in August. In accordance with new guidance from the CDC, all people on campuses should be masked indoors, regardless of their vaccination status.
- All businesses should review their operations to accommodate employees in a way that reduces unnecessary contact to avoid the spread of COVID in the workplace. This includes going back to remote work if necessary.
- All people should take a COVID test immediately after an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
 - If the test is positive, they should isolate immediately.
 - If negative, they should retest again between five and seven days post-exposure.
 - If they develop COVID-19 symptoms, they should test and isolate pending the results.

The following guidance from LDH and the CDC has not yet changed:

- CDC advises that fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine following an exposure to COVID-19 as long as they remain asymptomatic, and LDH is not yet altering this guidance.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, even those who are fully vaccinated or without a known exposure, should be tested and quarantine while awaiting test results.
- Anyone who tests positive should immediately isolate. Isolation (for those who test positive for COVID-19) typically consists of:
 - If symptomatic, at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, symptoms are improving, and at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication.
 - If asymptomatic but with a positive test, 10 days from the time the test sample was collected.

Local leaders may implement mitigation measures that are more comprehensive and restrictive than the current state guidelines should they feel this is best for their communities.

What is the current mask mandate?

For people ages 5 and above, a face mask that properly cover the wearer’s mouth and nose must be worn indoors at all times, unless a person is in a home. **The mandate is in place at least until Oct. 27, 2021.**

The order has these exemptions:

- Anyone who has a medical condition that prevents the wearing of a face covering
- When consuming a drink or food
- When trying to communicate with a person who is hearing impaired
- When giving a speech for broadcast or to an audience
- When temporarily removing the mask for identification purposes

Face coverings are highly encouraged for those ages 2 to 4 as tolerated. Children younger than kindergarten age are exempt if they cannot wear a mask. However, the CDC and the Louisiana Department

of Health strongly encourage indoor mask wearing in public for all children aged two and older, especially as they are not yet eligible for the COVID vaccine.

At our school, we have some children with autism spectrum disorder, ASD, who will have difficulty wearing a mask while other children with ASD will not have an issue. Does the mask mandate require us to treat all of the students with ASD the same?

Of course not. The Governor’s mandate provides for exemptions for medical conditions, and ASD would fall under this exemption in appropriate cases. When this situation occurs, other mitigation strategies such as washing hands and physical distancing to the greatest extent possible are critically important to have in place.

What is the guidance for large gatherings?

For large gatherings, LDH recommends:

- Limit the size of indoor gatherings, moving events outdoors, or hosting meetings and events virtually to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 spread.
- All participants of indoor meetings and events are required to be masked.
- People with underlying health conditions that make them more likely to have severe COVID complications should avoid nonessential trips outside of the home.
- Event hosts and facilities should practice strong sanitation and hygiene practices and provide hand sanitizer for those who need it.
- Spaces should be staged to accommodate at least six feet of distance between guests.

What is the most up-to-date general guidance?

Generally, LDH shares these reminders for individuals and families who are trying to stay as safe as possible during the COVID-10 pandemic:

- If you can do an activity outdoors instead of indoors, do it outdoors.
- Follow good hygiene practices (wash your hands vigorously and frequently, and don’t touch your face).
- Stay away from crowded settings.
- Work virtually if possible.
- If you suspect you have been exposed to COVID-19, get tested immediately.
- If you’re in an at-risk group, be extra careful.
- Everyone who is sick or who has COVID symptoms should stay home.

What is the updated COVID-19 guidance for Louisiana State government employees?

Under the July 23, 2021 proclamation from the Governor, heads of state government agencies are authorized to enact masking procedures and mandates indoors.

As of July 26, 2021, executive branch agencies in the Governor's cabinet require masks to be worn indoors in state buildings by employees and visitors.

Agency leaders are directed to review their current operations to accommodate employees in a way that reduces unnecessary contact to avoid the spread of COVID in the workplace. Additional details for businesses about COVID-safe operations are posted on [OpenSafely.la.gov](https://www.open-safely.la.gov).

How common is a COVID-19 infection for people who are fully vaccinated?

Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the Delta variant. However, preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who do become infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others. To reduce their risk of infection with the Delta variant and

potentially spreading it to others: CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people:

- As of 8/4/2021, everyone in Louisiana age 5 and above must wear a mask in public indoor settings.
- Get tested and quarantine while awaiting test results if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.

THE DELTA VARIANT

How serious is the Delta variant?

The Delta variant is the most transmissible variant yet. It's faster, fitter, and it's now the dominant COVID strain in the country and Louisiana. If you're unvaccinated, you are the most vulnerable to this dangerous strain.

The overwhelming number of cases and hospitalizations are among unvaccinated individuals. According to the CDC, over 97 percent of people who are entering the hospital right now are unvaccinated. If you're vaccinated, you have very good (but not absolute) protection against hospitalization and death.

If I am vaccinated, do I need to worry about the Delta variant?

If you're vaccinated, you have very good (but not absolute) protection against hospitalization and death. The COVID vaccines offer protection against the Delta variant, but vaccinated residents can still pass the virus to vulnerable groups and those who are unvaccinated. Vaccinated individuals represent a very small amount of transmission occurring around the country.

With the Delta variant, are vaccinated and unvaccinated people both able to spread COVID-19? What are the recommendations?

Yes. Studies show the Delta variant produced similar amounts of virus in vaccinated and unvaccinated people if they get infected. This means vaccinated people can spread the virus, although they are less likely to get a serious illness.

In addition to offering another layer of protection, to limit the spread of the virus by unvaccinated people, CDC and LDH urge people to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible and always wear masks in indoor public places.

What should I do to protect myself and my family from the Delta variant?

With the Delta variant, Louisiana's insufficient vaccination rate, the summer season, and school about to start, we are in the perfect storm. To minimize death and suffering in this fourth surge LDH continues to recommend all people get one of the vaccines they are eligible for (Pfizer 12+years of age, Moderna/J&J 18+years of age) and has issued new guidance, including an indoor mask mandate:

As of 8/4/21, all people 5 years of age and older – vaccinated and unvaccinated – must wear face masks while indoors. This includes all academic institutions (K-12, universities, etc.)

All businesses should review their operations to accommodate employees in a way that reduces unnecessary contact to avoid the spread of COVID in the workplace. This includes going back to remote work if necessary.

All people should take a COVID test immediately after a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19.

- If positive, they should isolate immediately.
- If negative, they should retest again between five and seven days postexposure.
- If they develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point they should test and immediately isolate pending the results.

Where can I get vaccinated?

The vaccine is available at over 1,400 providers across the state. These providers include national and independent pharmacies, public health providers, clinics and physician offices, hospitals and others. For

vaccine information or to schedule an appointment with a local provider, call 855-453-0774 or go online at: <https://www.vaccines.gov/>.

Are more children in Louisiana getting sick with COVID-19 because of the Delta variant?

Yes, doctor’s offices and hospitals throughout Louisiana are seeing a significant increase in the number of children who are getting sick and hospitalized from COVID-19. Some experts attribute this to both the Delta variant and because children under age 12 are not eligible for vaccinations. The state issued a new mask mandate effective 8/4/2021 that also applies to K-12 schools, to help reduce the spread of the Delta variant among children as they return to school this fall.

According to the CDC, children are less susceptible than adults to severe disease or death from the coronavirus, with only around .01% of cases turning fatal. However, although they are less susceptible to severe disease, roughly 500 children across the U.S. have died of COVID-19, according to the CDC.

Will children under age 12 be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination?

According to the FDA, emergency authorization for Covid-19 vaccines in children under 12 could come in early to midwinter. Until the vaccine is authorized for this age group, the best protection is for all eligible family members is to get the shot as soon as possible. This will have an impact on reducing the spread of the disease to children. As of 8/4/2021, State guidance also mandates everyone ages 5 and above – vaccinated and unvaccinated – wear a mask in public indoor settings.

CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

When can my child or when can I as a teacher/staff return to school after being exposed, having symptoms or being sick with COVID-19?

The Louisiana Department of Education has developed extensive guidelines for in-person learning for the 2021-2022 school year. The guidelines are listed at this link: [Louisiana Believes - Louisiana Department of Education](#). Click on circle titled “*Pandemic Relief Funding, Planning, Guidance and Resources.*” Then click on *Ready to Achieve 2021-2022 School Operational Guidelines*. All of the information about when to stay home for a COVID-19 exposure or illness and when to return to school are outlined.

Parents should also discuss and follow the specific guidelines of your student’s school.

What about a child who was exposed to their parents who are COVID-positive, but the child is unable to isolate in the home. What is the guidance in this situation re: quarantine and return to school?

The child must stay home during the parents isolation period. If the child gets sick during this period, then the child needs to follow the protocol for a positive case.

If the child does not get sick (or test positive) during the parents isolation period, the child’s quarantine begins the day AFTER his/her parents last day of isolation.

For example, if a parent tests positive today, the parent must stay in isolation for 10 days. The child would stay home during this 10 days, then begin their quarantine on day #11. The student should follow the school’s recommendation for quarantine, which may be a full 14 day quarantine or may include the shortened quarantine options below:

- After 14 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop (gold standard) OR
- After 10 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop with daily monitoring through day 14 OR
- After 7 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, if the individual receives a COVID-19 negative test on day 5 or later after the parent’s isolation period ends and no symptoms develop with daily monitoring through day 14.

Does the mask mandate apply to all K-12 Schools – public and private?

Yes, Beginning August 4, 2021, all people ages 5 and above (or enrolled in kindergarten) - vaccinated and unvaccinated – are mandated to wear face masks while indoors. This applies to all K-12 schools.

What is the updated guidance to private early learning centers?

The Louisiana Dept. of Education provides updated COVID-19 FAQs for Early Childhood Providers at this link: [Child Care Guidelines](#). Some of the guidelines include:

- If COVID-19 is confirmed in a child or staff member:
 - » Follow CDC Guidance on home isolation for confirmed or suspected COVID-19.
 - » Identify close contacts (within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) and communicate the requirement to quarantine for 14 days
- The Office of Public Health recommends a 14-day quarantine period for close contacts in daycare and other school settings where masking and physical distancing cannot be maintained. This would likely apply to all early learning centers as masking is not recommended for children under 2 years of age and physical distancing is difficult in these age groups.

- Mask Requirements and Recommendations
 - All staff must continue to mask while indoors, regardless of vaccination status.
 - Parents and visitors must mask while in childcare facilities.
 - While outdoors, fully vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals do not need to mask if they adhere to physical distancing requirements.
 - Since children under the age of 12 are ineligible for vaccination, it is strongly recommended that children between the ages of 2 and 5 wear a mask. Children 5 years and older must wear a mask.

Are students or staff required to wear a mask or other face coverings?

Yes. Beginning August 4, 2021, all people ages 5 and above - vaccinated and unvaccinated – are mandated to wear face masks while indoors. This applies to K-12 schools, universities, and other higher education institutions, which return to on-campus learning in August. In accordance with new guidance from the CDC, all people on campuses should be masked indoors, regardless of their vaccination status.

Should I be concerned about sending my kids back to in-person school this fall? What does the state recommend to parents?

The Louisiana Department of Health is working closely with the Department of Education for recommendations to ensure children can return to school safely. Ultimately, all decisions about guidance and requirements for returning safely to school will be made by local school districts and independent schools. Keeping children safe includes making sure close contacts of a positive case quarantine to prevent further transmission.

The state issued a new mask mandate effective 8/4/2021 that also applies to K-12 schools, to help reduce the spread of the Delta variant among children as they return to school this fall.

PROOF OF VACCINATION STATUS

How can I prove my vaccination status?

There are several legally acceptable methods:

1. You can carry your physical vaccination card, which you received at the time you got your shots. If you do so, consider having it laminated.
2. You can use Louisiana's digital driver's license app, LA Wallet, to digitally display your Covid vaccination status (LA Wallet is available here: <https://lawallet.com/>.)
3. You can register with Louisiana's online vaccine registry, MyIR, and have the option to either print or digitally display a Covid-19 vaccine status. You can find MyIR here: <https://lawallet.com/>.
4. Finally, you could go to your healthcare provider and ask them to print a copy of your vaccination records on their official letterhead, with a date and signature, just as you would for a child's vaccination status for their schools.

How do I replace a lost or damaged CDC vaccination card?

Contact the vaccine provider, who will have your records on file, and will be able to fill a new card out for you. If you received your vaccine at a mass vaccination site which is no longer in operation, your local parish health unit or primary care physician will be able to access your records on Louisiana's vaccine registry, LINKS. Please be sure that all details entered are a match for your Louisiana driver's license or state ID, including name, DOB, address, and zip code, or you will not be able to download your vaccination status to LA Wallet.

If I was vaccinated in another state and lost my card, how can I get another one?

If you received one or both of your doses in another state, you will need to contact that state's vaccination registry, and have them provide you with a copy of your vaccination details. You can then provide that to your doctor or parish health unit, and have them enter your information in LINKS.

Once your information has been entered in LINKS, it will be visible to you on the MyIR site.

You can register or log in to MyIR to see all of your Louisiana vaccination records, and print out a copy of your records, which will also serve as proof of vaccination status. You can find MyIR here: <https://app.myirmobile.com/auth/register?state=LA>.

I can't get my Covid-19 vaccination status to display on LA Wallet

There are a number of reasons why this might be the case. The most common are that your details as displayed on your driver's license or state ID are not an exact match for the information that was entered in to your vaccination record. For example, if your name is shown as Robert on your driver's license, but Bob on your vaccine card, LA Wallet will not be able find your data – the system is looking for exactly what is shown on your driver's license: name, DOB, address, and zip code.

If you know that your name on your driver's license doesn't match what's on your vaccination card – for example, if you were married and changed your name – you will need to have your vaccine provider, your doctor or staff at the Parish Health Unit update your information in the state's LINKS vaccine registry so that the two records are a match.

How can a Louisiana National Guard member or other military personnel have their COVID-19 vaccination record appear on LA Wallet?

The LA Wallet app is unable to connect to the Department of Defense's medical records site. For your vaccination to appear on LA Wallet, your vaccination record needs to be entered into LINKS, which is the

Louisiana vaccination registry. You will therefore need to take your Covid-19 vaccination card to your primary care physician or local parish health unit, and have them add your military vaccination records into LINKS. Make sure that the information they are entering is an exact match for the driver's license or state ID you have on LA Wallet - including name, DOB, address, and zip code, or you will not be able to download your vaccination status to LA Wallet.

Will my COVID-19 vaccination appear in LA Wallet after I get my first dose of a Pfizer or Moderna shot?

No, your COVID-19 vaccination will not appear in LA Wallet until you have completed both shots of a two-shot series. It will appear in LA Wallet following a one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccination.

Can LA Wallet help me get my vaccination status on my phone?

Please try the steps above, first. If unsuccessful, LA Wallet has established a robust online help system. The link is: <https://lawallet.com/support/> Click on the Covid Status icon and you'll find information that will help you make this connection. There is also a phone helpline at: 225-263-4488.

I was vaccinated in another state. How can I get my vaccination status into Louisiana's system?

If you received one or both of your doses in another state, you will need to contact that state's vaccination registry, and have them provide you with a copy of your details. You can then provide that to your doctor or parish health unit, and have them enter your information on LINKS.

If you wish to use the LA Wallet digital driver's app to display your vaccination status, please make sure the details entered in to LINKS precisely match what is shown on your Louisiana driver's license: name, date of birth, address, and zip code.

I was vaccinated at a VA clinic. However, my vaccination record is not showing up in LA Wallet.

Currently, the COVID vaccination records of VA patients is not accessible to LA Wallet. However, the Office of Public Health is working with the Veterans Administration to add the vaccination records of VA patients to the Louisiana Immunization Network (LINKS) system per a data sharing agreement.

When this agreement is complete, the vaccination records of VA patients will be available in the LINKS system, and accessible by LA Wallet. Although we do not have an estimate of when this will occur, this process will one day allow Louisiana' VA patients to have their COVID-19 vaccination records appear on the LA Wallet app. We encourage VA patients to routinely check the LA Wallet app and see if their COVID vaccination record is visible.

I am a member of the military and received my vaccination from my Army unit (or Air Force, National Guard, Navy, etc). However, my vaccination record is not showing up in LA Wallet. Can this be fixed?

Not at this time. The COVID vaccination records of anyone working for the Department of Defense is not accessible to LA Wallet.

COVID-19 VACCINES

I recently received my third dose or a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Will this show up in my LA Wallet app?

Yes. In a few days, LA Wallet will release an upgraded version of their app. This update will include a listing of all COVID-19 vaccinations, as well as the green check mark that indicates your “fully vaccinated status.” Note, whether or not you get an extra shot, the green check appears once you receive two doses of Moderna or Pfizer or one dose of J&J.

Can I get the flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same time?

Yes, you can get the shots in the same visit. CDC and other health experts say that past experience shows vaccines work as they should and any side effects are similar whether the shots are given separately or in the same visit.

Does my employer have access to my vaccination records?

No, vaccination records, like all medical records, are available only to the patient, the individual’s healthcare provider and to select other public health officials.

Has the CDC approved the Pfizer booster shot? Is it available in Louisiana?

Yes, on September 23, CDC approved a third (booster) shot of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for certain populations and for people in some high risk occupational and institutional settings. The Pfizer booster shot is now available in Louisiana to the following people:

- **65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings** should receive a booster shot of Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine at least six months after completing their Pfizer primary two-shot series.
- **Ages 50–64 years with underlying medical conditions** should receive a Pfizer booster shot at least six months after completing their primary series.
- **Ages 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions** may receive a booster shot of Pfizer’s vaccine at least six months after their Pfizer primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.
- **Ages 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of their occupation** or institutional setting may receive a booster shot of Pfizer’s vaccine at least six months after their primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.

For a booster shot, do I have to go to the same provider or location where I received my first two doses?

No. We suggest you find a retail pharmacy such as CVS, Walgreens, Walmart or other community pharmacy that is offering the needed booster (Pfizer) shot, and schedule an appointment.

What is the difference between a booster dose and a third/supplemental dose?

Booster Dose: A Pfizer booster dose is available to these people six months after getting their second dose:

- Adults age 65 and older.
- Adults 50–64 with underlying medical conditions.
- Adults 18 years and older living in a long-term care settings such as a nursing facility.
- Adults 18–49 with underlying medical conditions based on their individual benefits and risks.
- People 18–64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting based on their individual benefits and risks.

3rd Dose/Supplemental Dose: People with a weak immune system can receive an additional dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine at least 28 days after getting their second shot. The 3rd dose should be the same as the first 2 doses.

Am I fully vaccinated without a COVID-19 vaccine booster?

Yes, people who got a two-dose vaccine or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson shot are considered fully vaccinated — even without a booster. CDC says you're fully vaccinated two weeks after receiving a second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine, or one dose of the J&J.

The vaccines offer strong protection against serious illness, but health officials now recommend boosters for some people at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 based on evidence that protection against milder disease can wane, especially among older adults.

I have seen that Louisiana is offering a \$100 payment to people who have put off getting their COVID-19 vaccination(s).

What about people who followed the recommendations and got vaccinated before October 1, 2021? Why would you reward those who haven't yet followed the recommendations?

We appreciate that you followed the recommendations. Your diligence has helped limit the pandemic to (almost) only those who have not yet gotten the shot. But, the unfortunate reality is some people still haven't gotten the shot, and we are trying everything possible to encourage them to get the shot.

Although your attentiveness to getting fully vaccinated has prevented you from this \$100 opportunity, our earlier incentive program – Shot At A Million – was open to everyone, even those who had gotten their shot before the promotion was announced.

What do I need to do to prove that I am eligible for the Pfizer booster dose?

Vaccine providers have been alerted that patients can verbally self-attest that they are eligible under any of the four categories above. There is no requirement for a written self-attestation form.

How do I know if I need a Pfizer booster dose?

Any patient unsure if they need a booster dose or if they qualify under a particular category, or with any other relevant questions, should discuss risk/benefits of the shot with their physician or healthcare practitioner.

What if I have lost my vaccination card? How is this third shot documented?

All vaccine doses that are administrations must be documented in the Louisiana Immunization Network (LINKS) within 24 hours of vaccination AND on the patient's CDC COVID-19 Vaccination card. If they don't have their old card, a new card containing just the administered booster dose, clearly marked as such, will be provided to the patient.

What if my primary vaccination series was Moderna or Johnson & Johnson, can I get a booster dose?

No. Currently, there is not a booster dose for either of these two other vaccines.

What should immunocompromised people who received the J&J/Janssen vaccine do?

The FDA's recent EUA amendment only applies to mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, as does CDC's recommendation. Emerging data have demonstrated that immunocompromised people who have low or no protection following two doses of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines may have an improved response after an additional dose of the same vaccine.

There is not enough data at this time to determine whether immunocompromised people who received the Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine also have an improved antibody response following an additional dose of the same vaccine.

When will other groups be approved for the booster vaccine? (ie elder population?)

On Aug 18, 2021 federal health officials announced their recommendation that people vaccinated with Moderna or Pfizer vaccines get a booster shot eight months after receiving their second dose to maximize its protection against the virus and its variants. The plan is to make this booster shot available this fall following FDA evaluation and CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) issuing booster dose recommendations.

In Louisiana, health officials are closely following this recommendation, as well as the evaluations and guidance from the FDA and CDC before announcing when booster shots will be available in Louisiana and who is eligible.

What should people who received the J&J/Janssen vaccine do about booster shots?

For people who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, federal health officials anticipate vaccine boosters will likely be needed. The J&J vaccine was not administered in the U.S. until March of 2021, and more data on J&J is expected in the coming weeks. With those data in hand, officials will keep the public informed of the timely plan for J&J booster shots.

When will the FDA fully approve the three available COVID-19 vaccines?

On August 23, 2021, the FDA approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech now carries the strongest endorsement from the FDA for people age 16 and over. The vaccine continues to be available under emergency use authorization (EUA) for individuals 12 through 15 years of age and for the administration of a third dose in certain immunocompromised individuals.

I heard there is a new name for the Pfizer vaccine. Is this true?

Yes. The vaccine that has been known as the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine and will now be marketed as Comirnaty (koe-mir'-na-tee), for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in individuals 16 years of age and older. **It is the exact same vaccine formula as before it was renamed.**

Why were they already declared safe before this approval?

Following clinical trials last year, the three vaccines now used in the U.S. received approval for emergency use (EUA) based on those studies over two months, the time period when serious side effects typically arise. The studies continued, and when six months of data was available for the Pfizer vaccine, it received full approval. The Modera and J&J vaccines are used under the EUA and are awaiting full approval like the Pfizer vaccine.

Can someone who received a first dose of AstraZeneca in another country get a Pfizer or Moderna shot for their second dose in the U.S.?

No. The AstraZeneca vaccine, and those from Pfizer and Moderna are completely different vaccines. If a person has not completed the series with a non-FDA approved vaccine in another country (such as AZ), they should restart the series here in the U.S. with an FDA approved vaccine (1 dose J&J or 2 doses Pfizer/Moderna).

If a person has received BOTH doses of AZ vaccine in another country, there is no need to be revaccinated and they are considered vaccinated.

Is the Louisiana Department of Health making calls asking if people have had a COVID vaccination, or encouraging people to get a shot?

Yes, as part of our Bring Back Louisiana campaign, we have a contractor that is making calls like this to selected areas of the State. The areas are those in which there is a nearby vaccination site. We have found that many people are not aware of vaccination locations, so our goal is to make sure they know when and where they can conveniently get a shot.

What are the chances of young people getting myocarditis or pericarditis after getting an mRNA (Pfizer or Moderna) vaccination?

There has been a rare connection between myocarditis and pericarditis and the vaccines in a small number of individuals. However, according to numerous leading healthcare groups, the benefits of the vaccines greatly outweigh the risk.

The CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) reviewed the concern and concluded, “Myocarditis and pericarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle and surrounding tissue) is an extremely rare side effect, and only an exceedingly small number of people will experience it after vaccination. In addition, myocarditis and pericarditis are much more common if you get COVID-19, and the risks to the heart from COVID-19 infection can be more severe.”

The recommendation is as such, “Get vaccinated right away. This is the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, your community, and to return to a more normal lifestyle safely and quickly.”

How serious is the new Delta variant?

As reported by the news media, the CDC has now named Delta (B.1.617.2) a “variant of concern” as it spreads throughout the U.S. These three words mean the Delta variant spreads rapidly and some antibody treatments may not be as effective as they are against other variants.

On a better note, the CDC has said the three vaccines authorized in the U.S. are highly effective against the variant. Still the emergence of this variant heightens the need for all Americans who have not gotten the shot to get fully vaccinated as soon as possible.

Here are some other key points about the Delta variant:

- CDC predicts Delta to be 9.9 percent of all viruses sequenced in the US and 12.7 percent in the region that includes Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.
- Initial evidence suggests the Delta is more transmissible compared with other variants, including the Alpha variant (B.1.1.7).
- Vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. have been reported to be effective against Delta B.1.617.2 as well as other variants.

Some places across the country are putting indoor mask mandates back in place. Should I be concerned if I am fully vaccinated?

As of August 4, 2021, all people ages 5 and above - vaccinated and unvaccinated – are mandated to wear face masks while indoors. This mandate is in place at least until September 1, but may be extended if necessary. The mandate applies to K-12 schools, universities, and other higher education institutions.

According to the CDC, masking policies are designed to protect people who are not vaccinated. There are areas in the country that have low vaccination rates and more disease, and those areas are more likely to promote or require the use of masks.

Is Louisiana going to reinstate indoor mask mandates?

Yes. As of August 4, 2021, all people ages 5 and above - vaccinated and unvaccinated – are mandated to wear face masks while indoors. This mandate is in place at least until September 1, but may be extended if necessary. The mandate applies to K-12 schools, universities, and other higher education institutions.

I received a J&J shot that data shows might be less effective than the other vaccines with the COVID variants, should I be more concerned about getting COVID? Some doctors have recommended getting a booster shot with Pfizer or Moderna – should I do that?

Through clinical trials and real life use, all approved vaccines have been shown to be equally effective in preventing hospitalizations and deaths. Right now, there is no information to suggest you need a second shot with J&J even with the Delta variant. The CDC says it has every reason to believe all three vaccines continue to be effective against the Delta variant based on available data. There have been no recommendations for fully vaccinated people to receive a booster vaccine.

What about someone with a disability? Is there support for accessing vaccines?

Yes, On June 8, 2021 the U.S. Health and Human Services launched a national hotline to connect people with disabilities to information and services to improve access to COVID-19 vaccines. This hotline, called the Disability Information and Access Line (DIAL).

- Call 888-677-1199 from 8am to 7pm CST. This number will help people with disabilities find vaccination locations in their communities, assist with making vaccination appointments, and connect callers to local services – such as accessible transportation – to overcome barriers to vaccination.
- Callers can get information and resources to answer questions/concerns about the vaccines.
- Connects callers to information and services that promote independent living and address fundamental needs, such as food, housing and transportation.

To learn more about and connect with DIAL: acl.gov/dial; 888-677-1199 from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM ET; DIAL@n4a.org

Can I still register for the Shot At A Million Lottery for getting my COVID-19 Vaccine?

No. Registration link closed at noon on July 31 and the state is no longer accepting more people ahead of the final drawings in August. The next weekly cash prize and scholarships will be announced on August 6 and the final grand prize announcement of \$1M along with 5 scholarships will be held on August 13.

I am currently pregnant. Is it safe for me to get the COVID-19 vaccination?

According to the CDC, if you are pregnant, you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine. Getting a COVID-19 vaccine during pregnancy can protect you from severe illness from COVID-19. COVID-19 during pregnancy increases risks for severe complications and can increase chances for preterm birth.

Two leading obstetricians' groups, The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine, endorse the vaccine for pregnant women. They said vaccinations in tens of thousands of pregnant women over the past several months have shown the shots are safe and effective during pregnancy.

If you have questions about getting vaccinated during pregnancy, a conversation with your healthcare provider might help, but is not required for vaccination. You can also contact MotherToBaby at 1-866-626-6847. Experts are available to answer questions in English or Spanish. The free and confidential service is available Monday–Friday 8am–5pm (EST)

Can the COVID-19 vaccine be administered at the same time as other routine vaccines?

Yes. According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines may now be administered without regard to timing. This includes simultaneous administration of COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines on the same day, as well as co-administration within 14 days.

CDC's extensive experience with non-COVID-19 vaccines has demonstrated that vaccine effectiveness and adverse event profiles are generally similar when vaccines are administered simultaneously as when they are administered alone.

Should I get revaccinated if an antibody test result indicates I have no COVID-19 antibodies?

At this time, antibody tests should not be used to determine immunity or protection against COVID-19 at any time, and especially after a person has received a COVID-19 vaccination.

Right after getting my second shot, I received an automated message from the pharmacy stating I needed to make an appointment for my second shot. Why did I get this call?

The pharmacy in question has a gap in their IT system that is causing this automated message. They are aware of the problem and are implementing a fix that should be completed in June. The problem is, in a very limited amount of cases, the pharmacy has noticed that their system doesn't sync with the notification system and it generates these calls. If the patient is concerned – and they shouldn't be – they are encouraged to call the store to make sure the record for the second shot is in the system.

What is the current status of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine?

As of April, 23, 2021, providers can resume using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Has the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 Vaccine resumed in Louisiana? Where can I get it?

Yes. To find where to get a Johnson & Johnson vaccination, check this website:

<https://vaccinefinder.org/search/>

Should I be concerned about the safety of other vaccines?

The identification of what is approximately a less than 2-in-a-million risk associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is a sign that the nation's safety monitoring system for COVID vaccines is working. After any vaccine is successful in clinical trials and approved for use, the FDA continues to monitor it for safety. The pause in the use of the J&J vaccine allowed scientists to evaluate each incidence of the clotting disorder. They determined that the level of risk was very low and that the benefits of continued use of the J&J vaccine greatly outweighed any risk associated with it.

What was learned during the Johnson & Johnson vaccine pause?

The 10-day pause gave health officials time to review additional data to better understand the degree of risk associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine related to a blood clotting disorder. It also gave federal agencies and the medical community time to determine and share information on the most appropriate treatment response. The decision to lift the pause is based on the experts' determination that the benefits of again administering the vaccine greatly outweigh the very small degree of risk associated with its use.

Who is at risk for the blood clotting disorder associated with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine?

The likelihood of the blood clotting disorder resulting from the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is extremely rare. The risk varies by age and gender. There have been fewer than 1 case per million for men and for women who are 50 years or older; the risk is estimated to be about 7 cases per million for women age 18 to 49. If you have questions about the J&J vaccine or other vaccines, talk to your doctor.

If I got the Johnson & Johnson shot, am I at risk?

If you received the Johnson & Johnson shot and have not developed any of the side effects associated with the blood clotting disorder (severe headache or abdominal pain, shortness of breath, neurological symptoms, leg swelling) within three weeks of being vaccinated, the risk of an adverse reaction is unlikely. If you have questions or concerns, consult your doctor.

If I'm offered the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, should I wait until I can get either Pfizer or Moderna?

For most people, getting the first available COVID vaccine is the best thing you can do to safeguard your health. Your odds of contracting a possibly life-threatening case of COVID-19 are much higher than your odds of serious side effects from the vaccine. The risk of blood clots from COVID illness is 165,000 per million cases.

Who is eligible to receive the vaccine?

Everyone age 12 and older in the state of Louisiana is eligible.

Is parental consent needed for a person under age 18 to get the shot? If so, can the consent be given by someone other than the parent?

Yes and yes. Parental consent for anyone under 18 years old is required. This can be done in person or via signed form found on this page: <https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine/>. If the minor child is accompanied by an adult who is not the parent, the form is still required and is valid.

Can a parent or legal guardian give consent over the phone for a minor to receive COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes, although a written or electronic consent is preferable, over-the-phone consent can be used, if necessary.

Where can I find the medical risk / attestation form?

<https://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/marketingmaterials/COVID19-Vaccine-Attestation-Form.pdf>

I have received both doses of the COVID-9 vaccine. If I am exposed to someone who is sick with the virus, do I still need to isolate or quarantine?

According to the CDC, people who have been fully vaccinated against coronavirus – right now that means at least two weeks have passed since two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine were administered or one dose of J&J – do not have to quarantine if they are exposed to someone infected with the virus as long as they do not have any symptoms. However, they should still take precautions such as wearing a mask and practice social distancing.

For people who live in congregate settings such as nursing homes, the Department of Health still recommends quarantine for anyone who has been exposed.

I work in an industry that has been declared essential, and its workforce now eligible for the vaccine. How do I prove to the vaccination site that I'm considered an essential worker?

At this time there is no requirement other than to show you are employed in an industry declared to be essential. People are advised to bring documentation of employment such as a name badge, pay stub or any other document that shows where you are employed.

Are all vaccines the same?

There has been no evidence that any vaccine is better than the others.

When will the Johnson & Johnson vaccine be available to the public in Louisiana? Why should I get the Johnson & Johnson vaccine instead of Moderna & Pfizer? Is it as effective as the other two?

The new, one dose COVID vaccine from Johnson & Johnson has been granted Emergency Use Authorization by the FDA. It became available in Louisiana the week of March 1 when almost 38,000 doses of the vaccine were shipped to the state. People should get any FDA-approved COVID vaccine as soon as it becomes available. All of the vaccines have undergone clinical trials and have been shown to be very effective. In fact, the Johnson & Johnson one dose vaccine has shown to be 100 percent effective in preventing a COVID serious illness and death.

After rigorous trials and evaluation, the FDA has found the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to be safe and effective. It has been authorized for use, just like the other two vaccines. Just like the other vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is 100 percent effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths.

You are also fully vaccinated with one dose of this vaccine, whereas the other authorized vaccines are two doses. There are many people who actually prefer a one and done vaccine.

I have moved to Louisiana from another state where I received my first dose of the COVID vaccine. How and/or where can I get my second dose in Louisiana?

The Louisiana Office of Public Health is offering second doses at some of their Parish Health Units. Use the Louisiana vaccine finder site, <https://ldh.la.gov/covidvaccine-locations/>, and search by parish. Not all Health Units are offering the vaccine, so you may need to search multiple parishes.

What are the symptoms of an allergic reaction to the vaccine? What should I do if I have a reaction after getting the vaccine?

Although rare, allergic reactions are possible. It is for this reason that everyone who is vaccinated is observed for 15 minutes after getting the shot. For people who alert the vaccine team that they have allergies, they are observed for 30 minutes. Common reactions include flushing, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath. If you have an allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, you should contact your medical provider or seek emergency care if severe.

If you have a severe reaction, call 911. Please visit the CDC website for more information about allergic reactions and how to report them <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html>.

What should I do if I had to reschedule my second (2nd) dose vaccine appointment due to illness, but found out that the provider who gave me my first shot has switched vaccine brands?

Please call the LDH COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline for assistance scheduling your second dose: 1-855-453-0774.

I was ill and couldn't make my appointment for my second (2nd) dose and I am now being told by the place that gave me my first shot that I need to find another place to get my next shot. What should I do?

Please call the LDH COVID-19 Vaccine Hotline for assistance scheduling your second dose: 1-855-453-0774.

How do I get information about the number of vaccine doses that have been given out in Louisiana and in my parish?

The Department of Health has a dashboard on its Covid vaccine website – covidvaccine.la.gov – that provides vaccine information. At this time, we have data at the regional level. In time, we hope to offer more and more detailed information on the dashboard.

What is the COVID app that LDH is promoting? How do I get it and why is it beneficial to have this on my phone? Should I be concerned about my privacy?

The app is called COVID Defense, and is available for e application for iPhones, Google and Android phones. The app allows users to receive notifications informing them if there is a risk they were exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus. Use of the technology is completely voluntary, private, and secure.

COVID Defense does not collect the location of a phone or individual to detect exposure, and it does not share a user's identity. App users must opt in to use the tool and may opt out at any time. No personal information is required to use the app.

COVID Defense can be downloaded in the iPhone App Store or Android Google Play Store. For more information or to download the application, visit coviddefensela.com.

How is it determined the amount of vaccine Louisiana receives each week and where can I find a location to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and make an appointment?

The federal government determines each state's vaccine allotment. Weekly, Operation Warp Speed notifies Louisiana and other states about the allotment of vaccines each state will receive. The states then determine what clinics, pharmacies and hospitals will receive a portion of that week's allocation. Today, there are more than 1,800 Louisiana providers enrolled to administer vaccines. However, there is only a relatively small amount of vaccine being allocated to each state each week. The result is only a small percentage of clinics and pharmacies have received doses.

To locate a pharmacy or other provider location, you can go to the Louisiana Department of Health website at covidvaccine.la.gov.

Patients must contact a participating provider or register online with the provider to make an appointment. You can find a provider at the Louisiana Department of Health website at covidvaccine.la.gov. Patients who arrive without an appointment will not be vaccinated. Vaccinations are BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. LDH and LA211 cannot make appointments for patients; only providers can.

What are the side effects or allergic reactions to the Covid-19 vaccine?

There are minor side effects. These are a normal sign that the body is building protection. Common minor side effects include pain and swelling in the arm along with fever, chills, tiredness, or a headache often lasting 24-36 hours. Pain at the injection site can be relieved by applying a clean, cool, wet washcloth over the area. The discomfort from fever includes drinking plenty of fluids and dressing lightly.

These normal side effects may feel like a minor flu and even affect the ability to do daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Allergic reactions are also possible, but they are extremely rare. It is for this reason that everyone who is

vaccinated is observed for 15 minutes after getting the shot. For people who alert the vaccine team that they have allergies, they are observed for 30 minutes. Common reactions include flushing, rapid heartbeat, shortness of breath. If you have an allergic reaction after leaving the vaccination site, you should contact your medical provider or seek emergency care if severe. If you have a severe reaction, call 911. Please visit the CDC website for more information about allergic reactions and how to report them <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/allergic-reaction.html> .

Information regarding Egg Allergy/Vaccine Ingredients

According to the CDC, the Covid-19 vaccines do not contain eggs. You can find more information about this at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines.html> . Click on the names of the vaccines in the dark blue boxes and you can get more information on each.

I prefer one brand of the vaccine instead of the other(s). How can I find a place that is using the brand I prefer?

For the most part, Pfizer doses have been delivered to hospitals and Moderna doses have gone to pharmacies and everywhere else. The best way to find a location(s) that is using the brand you prefer is to ask each what brand they are using when trying to set an appointment.

There have been some suggestions that the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is morally compromised. Should a person who is Catholic get the vaccination?

We encourage residents to consult their doctors or medical professionals in their communities in making an informed decision. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe and effective, and is another tool that will help us protect communities and ultimately end the COVID pandemic that has cost us more than 9,600 lives in Louisiana. We encourage residents to take the first vaccine made available to them - if they pass it up it could quite literally cost them their life.

Do I have to be a patient or current customer at a vaccine provider to make an appointment or will vaccine providers prioritize their own patients/customers for vaccine appointments?

Vaccines must be made available to all people in Phase 1b Tier 1. Vaccine providers cannot establish and prioritize subgroups within the nine population groups listed. As an example, when offering the vaccine or setting appointments, providers cannot limit vaccination to their existing patients nor can they offer vaccine to some eligible subgroups but not others. LDH encourages and expects a fair and equitable process that does not advantage or disadvantage any one group or classification of patient/recipient over another.

How long should I wait between getting a routine vaccine/shot and then getting a COVID shot?

Given the lack of data on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines administered simultaneously with other vaccines, the vaccine series should routinely be administered alone, with a minimum interval of 14 days before or after administration with any other vaccine. So, wait 14 days after the rabies vaccine to get a COVID vaccine.

Is it true that older adults face an elevated risk from the virus?

Older people and people with underlying health conditions appear to be about twice as likely to develop serious outcomes versus otherwise younger, healthier people. The CDC is particularly concerned about these people, given the growing number of cases in the United States.

Older adults experience a gradual deterioration of their immune system, making it harder for their body to

fight off diseases and infection. Many are also more likely to have underlying conditions that hinder the body's ability to cope and recover from illness. People with health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes need to be especially careful to avoid exposure to COVID-19.

Is it true that taking one of the vaccines that uses RNA technology may make a person more susceptible to different viruses in the future?

No. That's just a rumor. There is no scientific evidence to support the rumor. For the most up to date information, visit the CDC website at [cdc.gov/coronavirus/](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/)

What do I do if there is no pharmacy or other vaccine provider near me?

The Department of Health is working every day to enroll more pharmacies and other providers in the COVID vaccination program.

Who do I contact if I'm interested in becoming a COVID-19 vaccine provider?

LDH has established a COVID-19 Provider Enrollment Hotline to assist potential COVID-19 vaccination providers with enrolling in the program. If there are questions related to enrollment, please call 225-325-5880. A team member will be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm (excluding holidays) to help complete the enrollment process. The following help will be provided:

- Assistance with the Provider Enrollment Process and Provider Agreements
- Locating an Immunization Consultant within your Region
- Provider status updates
- For technical assistance with LA LINKS, providers should email: LA.LINKS@la.gov

What do I do if I am homebound and cannot visit a local pharmacy?

Anyone who is homebound, for whatever reason, can call the state's **Vaccination Hotline at 1-855-453-0774** to have a provider bring a vaccine directly to their home.

Do I have to go back to the same pharmacy for the second (2nd) dose?

Yes. The pharmacy where you received your first dose will have the record of that vaccination.

I got my first (1st) dose at Walgreens but have been unable to find out when I need to go back for my second (2nd) dose. What should I do?

Walgreens is aware of the problem and is addressing it. All vaccine providers (pharmacies, clinics and hospitals) are automatically scheduled to receive second dose shipments from the State and people must return to the same provider where they received their first vaccine dose. The Department of Health has given guidance to vaccine providers to make sure and schedule people for their second doses before they leave after receiving their first. dose of vaccine.

For the Walgreens issue, their stores have been asked by their corporate office to make sure to send an email to those who got the first dose. The email will say how to schedule the second dose. In the future, Walgreens will schedule a person for their second shot at the time the person gets their first shot.

How long after the first (1st) dose can a person wait before it's too late to get the second (2nd) dose?

The Moderna vaccine requires a second shot, or booster, 28 days after the first. The Pfizer vaccine requires the second dose after 21 days.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, people should get their second shot as close to

the recommended 3-week or 1-month interval as possible. However, there is no maximum time between when you get the first and second doses for either vaccine. The CDC does say people should not get the second dose earlier than the recommended interval.

I have lost/misplaced the Vaccination Card that was given to me when I received my COVID vaccination. How can I get another card?

A person who received a vaccine can register online with the MyIR Mobile app to access his immunization record. The URL is: <https://app.myirmobile.com/auth/register?state=LA>

You can also call your primary care physician, the local Parish Health Unit or the location where you were vaccinated and explain your situation. Any provider that can log into the LINKS system (state immunization network) can locate your info and print it out for you.

How Can I prove my vaccination status?

For answers to questions related to proof of vaccination status, using LA Wallet and replacement vaccination card, go to this webpage: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/faq/category/142>

What is the v-safe app?

The v-safe app uses text messaging and web surveys to provide personalized health check-ins after you receive a COVID-19 vaccination. Through v-safe, you can quickly tell CDC if you have any side effects after getting the COVID-19 vaccine. Depending on your answers, someone from CDC may call to check on you and get more information. V-safe will also remind you to get your second COVID-19 vaccine dose if needed. For more information, go here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafe.html>

I do not have a cell phone or a computer, and have lost my vaccine card. How can I get a replacement?

We can suggest three ways to get your vaccination record. First, call your primary care physician or the location where you were vaccinated and explain your situation. Ask if they can log into the LINKS system (state immunization network), locate your info and print it out for you.

Second, check with your local Parish Health Unit. The staff there has access to the immunization network (LINKS) and can assist you in getting a new vaccination record.

Third, go to your public library and use a computer there. Anyone who received a vaccine can register online with the MyIR Mobile app to access his/her immunization record. The URL is: <https://app.myirmobile.com/auth/register?state=LA>

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, a vaccine should be offered to you regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19.

We won't know how long immunity produced by vaccination lasts until we have more data on how well the vaccines work.

How long must a person wait before getting the COVID vaccine if they had COVID?

Vaccination should be deferred until the person has recovered from the acute illness (if the person had

symptoms) and they are no longer in isolation. This recommendation applies to people who develop SARS-CoV-2 infection before receiving any vaccine doses as well as those who develop SARS-CoV-2 infection after the first dose but before receipt of the second dose, and those who tested positive on an antibody test prior to receiving any vaccine dose.

Can a COVID positive person receive their second of the vaccine?

Whether it's for the first or second dose of the vaccine, someone with a known COVID-19 infection should put off their vaccination until they have recovered from symptoms or the criteria has been met for them to discontinue isolation.

Is it possible to test positive for COVID after getting fully vaccinated?

Yes, but it is rare. According to the CDC, a small percentage of people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will still develop COVID-19 illness if they are exposed to the virus that causes it. These are called "vaccine breakthrough cases." It is also possible that some fully vaccinated people might have infections, but not have symptoms (asymptomatic infections).

Is it possible to have a positive result for COVID after getting the vaccine?

Antibody tests should (and hopefully will be) positive following vaccination. However, if a person is infected with COVID (even though they have been vaccinated), they could still be positive on a viral test. Getting vaccinated will not make you positive on a viral test if you are not infected with the actual virus.

Once a person receives their second dose, is there (clear and standard) guidance on their social distancing and/or quarantine patterns?

According to the CDC, people who have been fully vaccinated against coronavirus – right now that means at least two weeks have passed since two doses of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine were administered or one dose of J&J – do not have to quarantine if they are exposed to someone infected with the virus as long as they do not have any symptoms. However, they should still take precautions such as wearing a mask and practice social distancing. If they become symptomatic, they should seek testing as soon as possible and self-quarantine while they wait for results.

Additionally, people who are vaccinated still need to follow all social distancing and masking guidelines outlined in Federal, State, and business guidance.

Will the vaccines be ok for a person with cancer, who is immunocompromised, or has a chronic disease?

People with certain health conditions, including cancer, may be at higher risk for serious disease if they get COVID. However, the COVID vaccine was not tested on patients undergoing cancer treatments or patients during clinical trials. As the vaccine becomes more widely available, there will be more information learned about the indications, benefits, and side effects in people with serious health conditions.

You should always consult with your doctor to get the most up-to-date information so you can make an informed decision about vaccination.

How long will the vaccine offer protection?

This is a new vaccine so it is still unknown as there is not enough information at this point to know how long the vaccine will protect against the coronavirus. As more people are vaccinated, we will have more information about how long the protection will last.

How does the vaccine work?

Unlike many vaccines, the COVID-19 vaccine does not contain a dead or a weakened virus that triggers an immune response. Instead, the COVID-19 vaccine contains a genetic instruction manual that tells your immune system how to respond and protect you from exposure to the actual virus.

The technology used in the vaccines is not new. It is called mRNA, or messenger RNA, and it has been around for decades. This is the first time mRNA has been used in a vaccine, but the effect is the same as other vaccines: Your body gets protection without the serious consequences of a severe illness due to COVID-19 exposure.

Why is it difficult to find a pharmacy or clinic that is offering the shot?

There is currently a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine in the United States, but supply will increase in the weeks and months to come.

The goal is for everyone to be able to easily get vaccinated against COVID-19 as soon as large enough quantities are available. Once the vaccine is widely available, the plan is to have several thousand vaccination providers offering COVID-19 vaccines in doctors' offices, retail pharmacies, hospitals, and federally qualified health centers.

I have received the two doses of the vaccine – am I safe/immune from contracting COVID if I've been exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID?

It typically takes a few weeks for the body to produce the cells necessary to offer protection from the virus after vaccination. Therefore, it is possible that a person could be infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 just before or just after vaccination and then get sick because the vaccine did not have enough time to provide protection. While rare, breakthrough infections are possible and fully vaccinated individuals should seek testing if they develop symptoms of COVID-19.

Is the vaccine OK for children?

As of now, the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine that is available for children. However, it is limited to people age 12 and above.

How much will it cost to get vaccinated?

While we remain in the pandemic the federal government has ensured that vaccines are made available to those in need without cost to the individual. A provider cannot ask a patient for payment, though they can bill insurance for a vaccine administration fee or the federal government if the person is uninsured. A provider also may not bill for a regular office visit to administer the vaccine.

Once the vaccine is available and many people are getting the shot, can businesses fully reopen? Can we go back to normal?

The vaccine is an important step in allowing us to get back to "normal." However, communities will still monitor the number of cases, hospitalizations and deaths in their areas, and make decisions based on the most up-to-date information.

International Travel: What are the current CDC testing requirements for international travel to the U.S.?

Rapid tests are not acceptable. Effective January 26, 2021, CDC requires that all air passengers 2 years of age or older traveling to the US (including US Citizens and legal permanent residents) to get tested no more than 3 days (72 hours) before travel by air into the United States and show a negative PCR test result to the

airline before boarding a flight, or be prepared to show documentation of recovery (proof of a recent positive viral test and a letter from your healthcare provider or a public health official stating that you were cleared to travel). For additional information about these requirements visit the CDC website:

<https://www.tripsguard.com/destination/louisiana/>.

VACCINE ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible to receive a vaccine at a pharmacy or other provider?

Everyone in the state of Louisiana is eligible as of March 2021. And beginning on May 13, 2021, people as young as age 12 can receive the Pfizer vaccine.

Is the vaccine only available to Louisiana residents or can someone from another state or who immigrated to the U.S. get the vaccine? Do they need to show documentation?

The vaccine is available to anyone who meets the current age, health status or eligibility group status. Louisiana or U.S. citizenship is not a requirement.

How and when will nursing home residents be vaccinated?

All Louisiana nursing homes are being vaccinated via a partnership between the federal government, CVS and Walgreens.

What if I don't have an ID? Can I still get the vaccine if I'm in an eligible age group?

While the guidance from LDH does encourage providers to ask for some form of official identification (such as a driver's license) to assess age, if the person has no ID they will accept self-attestation.

What if a vaccine provider is giving out vaccines to people who aren't currently eligible to receive them?

The Department of Health has been looking into these cases and have found that in almost all instances the providers have acted appropriately so as not to waste vaccines that are set to expire. It is not unusual – when one person misses an appointment – for the provider to offer that vaccine dose to another person, even if the other person is not in a priority group. This is acceptable.

Is the vaccine only available to Louisiana residents or can someone from another state get the vaccine?

Louisiana is not limiting vaccinations to Louisiana residents. People from out of state who meet Louisiana's vaccine eligibility requirements can make an appointment for a vaccine.

NURSING HOMES AND ASSISTED LIVING

I would like to visit my mother in her nursing home. I am told I cannot do this in her own room. When will I be allowed to visit with her in her room?

The Louisiana Department of Health is following guidance from the CDC that was updated in March. The guidance allows for on-site visits of nursing home residents inside and outside. The inside guidance reads as follows:

Facilities should allow indoor visitation at all times and for all residents (regardless of vaccination status), except for a few circumstances when visitation should be limited due to a high risk of COVID-19 transmission (note: compassionate care visits should be permitted at all times).

The scenarios that limit indoor visitation are:

- Unvaccinated residents, if the nursing home's COVID-19 county positivity rate is >10% and <70% of residents in the facility are fully vaccinated;
- Residents with confirmed COVID-19 infection, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated until they have met the criteria to discontinue Transmission-Based Precautions; or
- Residents in quarantine, whether vaccinated or unvaccinated, until they have met criteria for release from quarantine.

How and when will nursing home residents be vaccinated?

All Louisiana nursing homes have signed onto a partnership between the federal government, CVS and Walgreens that calls for pharmacy workers to administer the vaccine in long-term care facilities. For logistical considerations, the Moderna vaccine will be used in that partnership.

Are nursing homes required to report if a staff member or resident has COVID?

Yes, nursing facilities are not only required to routinely test their residents and staff, they must also report the test results to the Louisiana Department of Health.

How can a loved one be removed from a nursing home?

Talk to the administrator and Director of Nursing at the facility where your loved one lives.

What precautions are nursing homes and assisted living facilities taking?

All licensed healthcare facilities, including nursing homes, in the state are required to restrict visitors to those deemed essential, vital or necessary to the care and well-being of patients, clients and residents. This prohibition will be in place until it is lifted by the Louisiana Department of Health.

Nursing homes, assisted living centers and other similar healthcare facilities have the authority to restrict entry to people, including family members and friends of residents, during this health crisis.

Nursing homes and assisted living centers are also undergoing baseline and repeated testing of both residents and staff to reduce and try to eliminate COVID-19 in these settings.

Are assisted living residents allowed to come and go off premises as they please?

The CDC has developed extensive guidance for nursing homes, assisted living and other long-term care facilities. These include recommendations about if and when a resident should leave the facility, limits on visitation, restricting volunteers and non-essential healthcare personnel, canceling all group activities and

communal dining. To protect their residents, all long-term care facilities in Louisiana have implemented these recommendations.

COVID-19 TESTING

How much does it cost to get a COVID-19 test?

There is no charge for COVID tests done by the State or done by the Louisiana National Guard. You can search for a COVID test location here: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3934>

Testing is also free at all federally qualified health centers (community clinics). You can search for a clinic near you at: www.lpca.net/main/for-patients/find-a-health-center. Just enter your zip code in the search tool to find a nearby clinic. You should contact the clinic first to get information about their testing procedures and requirements.

In Louisiana, no commercial insurance company can charge a patient an out of pocket fee for COVID testing. Medicaid and Medicare cover all of the costs of COVID testing. The federal government has made provisions for uninsured patients to receive free COVID testing.

Many private providers such as urgent care clinics charge for a COVID test. You should contact the testing site before you arrive to understand if there is a cost, how much and if you should bring other information.

Should I be tested for the virus?

If you have mild symptoms, believe you have been exposed to someone who is COVID-positive or and are worried that you might have COVID-19, you should be tested. Be sure to call your doctor or local health department first before you go to the doctor's office without an appointment to ensure you aren't potentially exposing others to the virus.

If you have mild symptoms and are worried that you might have COVID-19, call your doctor or local health department instead of going to a clinic or doctor's office without an appointment, to ensure you aren't potentially exposing others to the virus.

If you have severe breathing problems, seek medical attention or call 911 immediately and let the person you speak with know that you have respiratory problems and need to be isolated and seen right away. LDH is publishing a daily list of testing sites at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click Guidance and Resources and see Community Testing Sites.

Is there an app that will help me know if I need to be tested?

Yes, there is an app and a website that has been developed by the CDC and Apple. These tools guide people through a series of questions about their health and exposure to determine if they should seek care for COVID-19 symptoms. The tool provides CDC recommendations on social distancing and self-isolating, how to closely monitor symptoms, recommendations on testing, and when to contact a medical provider. The free app can be downloaded Apple's [App Store](https://www.apple.com/covid19) or on [Google Play](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.cdc.covid19) or access the tool online at www.apple.com/covid19.

Where can I go to get tested?

Tests sites are being set up throughout the state at the local level. People wishing to be tested can find a

testing site on the Department of Health’s website at: <http://ldh.la.gov/COVID-19Testing>. This site is updated often, whenever new sites are opened.

The website has a mapping feature to help users find the nearest testing site. Just enter your zip code in the search tool (found left of the top of the map). Information includes hours of operation, address, phone number and other requirements.

Each testing facility has their own criteria for testing. Many sites require a medical provider submit a written referral to the testing site, while others do not have such a requirement. It is important that you contact the test site location or your healthcare provider for instructions before traveling to the test site. All testing is being done by clinical providers, clinics and in hospitals. If you believe you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should contact your primary care physician for guidance.

How are nasal COVID-19 tests conducted? How accurate are they?

At most testing sites, samples are taken from the nasal cavity using a swab from the inside of your nose. It usually takes from 3-5 days to get the results of these tests from the lab.

When getting tested, the person conducting the test will insert a long stick/swab up your nose and twirl it around to collect secretions on the swab. You may be asked to do the nose swab yourself. The swab must be inserted pretty far back in the nose to get the sample.

No medical test is 100% accurate for many reasons, including error and timing of the test. Because it is possible to get a negative result even when you have coronavirus, it is important to be careful even when you receive a negative result. So, if you have symptoms – even if you get a negative test result – it is advisable to stay at home until you have been symptom-free for at least 72 hours.

How long does it take to get results?

Currently, most commercial labs that process the tests are able to report results back to the patient in one to three days.

The Department of Health does not get any test results, and we recommend that patients who get tested ask staff at the testing site when to expect results, and where to call to get those results. We recommend everyone, when they are getting tested, to ask for a phone number to call or website/app to use if they haven’t received their results within the timeframe that was given.

I was tested recently and still haven’t gotten my results. How can I get my results?

Thank you for calling 211. We are aware that it is taking up to two weeks for people to be notified of their results. We urge you to be patient. Test results will be provided by the lab to the provider who ordered the test or are available on the lab’s online portal depending on the site where you were tested.

What should I do while I wait for my test results? Can I go out in public and/or return to work?

The Department of Health strongly urges you to self-quarantine while you wait for your test result. Testing does not replace quarantining. If you believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, you should self-quarantine at your home and away from others, including your family if possible, for

- 14 days from the last day you were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop (gold standard)
OR

- 10 days from the last day you were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop with daily symptom monitoring through day 14 OR
- 7 days of quarantine from the last day you were exposed, if you receive a COVID-19 negative viral test (at home tests do not qualify for shortened quarantine) on day 5 or later after exposure and no symptoms develop, with daily symptom monitoring through day 14.

For answers to your specific situation, you should contact your physician.

I would like for my clinic to offer COVID-19 testing to the public. What do I need to do?

There are no state requirements for clinics that want to provide COVID-19 testing to the public. Clinics are responsible for ordering their testing supplies, contracting with a laboratory to analyze the results, developing the necessary processes and training to implement a testing program, communicating with the public about the site and its hours of operation, and providing the results to those who were tested.

I am interested in hosting a mobile test site at my office/facility/clinic/location. What do I need to do?

The Louisiana Office of Public Health, the Louisiana National Guard and local governments have been working together to set up mobile test sites. The goal is to make it as easy and convenient as possible for residents to get a test. For information about the need for, and to offer to host a site in your region, contact your OPH Regional Medical Director at: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/directory/category/13>

What if I tested positive and I'm homeless or I cannot return to my current residence? Where can I go for housing/shelter during self-isolation?

The state has a site for people who are homeless, test positive for COVID-19 and do not need assistance with activities for daily living such as eating, bathing, walking, etc.

A person seeking admission must provide name, date of birth, phone number, current medication (if taking any) and any medical diagnosis, the pick-up location and COVID test date.

The phone number for accessing this process is 877-766-2130. When calling this line, the person is entered in the contact tracing system; they will then be referred to a Resource Coordinator regarding isolation sites. A person seeking admission must provide name, date of birth, phone number, current medication (if taking any) and any medical diagnosis, the pick-up location and COVID test date.

Free transportation can be arranged to the site. Housing at the site is in RVs. Free laundry services and three meals a day are provided. The site has on-site medical personnel. Upon discharge case management will work with you to obtain temporary housing such as in a hotel or until other housing arrangements can be made.

How long after exposure should I get tested?

You should get tested immediately after you learn you were exposed and again between days 5 and 7 post exposure. This is because the time between when you are exposed and when your test would be positive can vary from 4-14 days. Therefore, even though someone may have the virus, the test would not be positive until possibly day 4 or longer.

I did not test positive for COVID-19 but I am interested in taking an antibody test to confirm if I have developed an immunity. Is this possible?

Check with your healthcare provider. If you can find a provider doing the antibody test, then yes, it might

be possible to get such a test.

Details: CDC has developed a laboratory blood test to assist with efforts to determine how much of the U.S. population has been infected with COVID-19. However, antibody test results should not be used as the sole basis to diagnose someone with an active the COVID-19 infection. It typically takes 1 to 3 weeks after someone becomes infected for their body to make antibodies; some people may take longer to develop antibodies. Depending on when someone was infected and the timing of the test, the test may not find antibodies in someone with an active infection.

Are positive results from antibody tests reported to the State and counted as new cases (as far as the numbers go on the public reporting site)?

No. We are currently not including positive antibody tests into case counts. This is because the diagnostic tests are better defined and more reliable. At the appropriate time, we will incorporate antibody test results into our cases counts.

How are the number of active COVID-19 cases determined?

Because of several factors and variables, including when a case is identified, when that person becomes symptom-free and because we only know of cases reported to the State, there is not a simple way to determine the number of active cases in a region or statewide at any given time. For these reasons, the Department of Health does not calculate an accurate number for active cases.

On its website, the State calculates cases as “Presumed Recovered.” How is that determined?

Presumed recovered counts are updated weekly on the coronavirus website. A person is presumed recovered if:

- it has been more than 14 days, since he/she tested positive and he/she is not currently in the hospital or deceased (when hospital status is known), or
- it has been more than 21 days, since he/she tested positive and he/she is not deceased (when hospital status is unknown).

Are individuals tracked to see how many tests they've had and what tests were done and reported as one? And, if an individual is retested, or when they are required to have two tests in order to return to work, are each of their tests being counted as a new case in the numbers?

All positive cases are de-duplicated and represents one individual regardless of how many positive tests they received.

Earlier this year I was extremely ill. My doctor tested me for the coronavirus and the test result was negative. I recovered, but I believe I had the virus. How can I know if I had COVID-19?

It is possible for a COVID-19 test to give a negative result in some people with the virus. This means that you could possibly have had COVID-19 even though the test was negative. For this reason, healthcare providers treat a person’s symptoms regardless of the test result.

An antibody test would indicate whether you had COVID-19 or not. We recommend that you talk to your healthcare provider about such a test and any other recommended next steps.

Upon recovery from COVID-19, am I immune?

At this time, there are still some unknowns. For other viruses, people have developed immunities after being exposed to the virus.

However, Since COVID-19 is a new coronavirus, we do not know if the antibodies that result from a COVID-19 illness will provide someone with immunity from a future infection. If antibodies do provide immunity, we don't know what titer or amount of antibodies would be protective or the duration that protection would last. CDC scientists are conducting studies to better understand the level of antibodies needed for protection, the duration of that protection, and the factors associated with whether a person develops a protective antibody response.

If someone has multiple tests – some are positive and some negative – are all those tests being counted as positive cases or are they looking at the names for duplicates?

Case counts reported on the LDH website represent individual persons with positive results for COVID-19, not numbers of positive test results received. Multiple results are often reported for an individual (positive, negative, or otherwise) due to repeat testing, but a single positive test for each individual is used for case counting.

LDH uses an extensive non-duplication process involving automated and manual review to account for non-exact person matches due to data entry errors, incomplete data, and other issues in the lab data reported to LDH.

Despite our best efforts, there may still be a small number of duplicate records in our dataset, and these will be resolved as they are detected, which may lead to changes in case counts. The actual number of cases is likely higher than reported here due to test reporting lags, incomplete testing, and undetected cases among asymptomatic individuals.

I have not had COVID symptoms. I will be traveling out-of-state to visit family and I don't want to expose them. What should I do?

In all cases in which you interact or come in close contact with someone who is not a member of your immediate household, you should take the standard precaution of social distancing, mask wearing and practicing proper hand hygiene. And, do not visit others if you have symptoms or if you have been exposed to someone who is COVID-positive.

Hasn't a new at-home test been developed so people can see if they have ever been exposed to the coronavirus?

The Food and Drug Administration, FDA, has approved the first coronavirus test that lets people collect a sample at home. This test marks the first time the agency has cleared an at-home Covid-19 test that will allow for at-home sample collection.

Developed by LabCorp, the test will initially be made available to health care workers and first responders who might have been exposed to the virus.

What if I don't have a doctor or have insurance?

If you do not have a doctor or if you do not have insurance, contact your nearest community health clinic. You can search for a clinic near you at: www.lpca.net/main/for-patients/find-a-health-center. Please use the search tool to find a clinic near you using your zip code.

If you are looking for information about testing, LDH publishes a daily list of testing sites at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click Guidance and Resources and see Community Testing Sites.

Should I go to the ER? Or, when should I go to the ER?

You should go to the ER if you are seriously ill (difficulty breathing, confusion, dehydrated). If you are sick with typical cold or flu symptoms, call your primary care doctor.

My tests were done by a Quest Diagnostics lab. What's the process getting my results from Quest?

Laboratory results for a Quest Diagnostics lab will be sent to you through the secure MyQuest online portal or app. Sign up at [MyQuestDiagnostics.com](https://www.MyQuestDiagnostics.com) or download the app on the Apple App Store or Google Play. If you have difficulty scheduling your appointment, please call Quest's dedicated COVID-19 line at 866-448-7719, Monday through Friday, 7am-7pm.

My tests were done by LabCorp. What's the process of getting my results?

Results for tests conducted by LabCorp can be accessed through their online portal at www.labcorp.com/results or their mobile app. Download the LabCorp Mobile App on the Apple App Store or Google Play.

Do hospitals have policies in place to keep inpatients who have been tested for COVID-19 and whose tests are pending from having visitors in their rooms?

Hospitals and other healthcare facilities are restricting non-essential personnel from visiting people in their facilities. Patients under investigation (awaiting testing) should not have visitors, and healthcare personnel should be wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

Is the State testing patients who are in jail?

Patients who are suspected to have COVID-19 and who reside in a correctional facility or in a long term care facility are appropriate for testing by the State lab.

Of the people who have tested positive so far in Louisiana, how many have needed hospitalization?

The most up-to-date information about cases, deaths, hospitalizations and other data can be found at the Department of Health's COVID-19 website: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus

What are the appropriate swab kits to use for COVID19 testing?

Providers can use any available Viral Transport Media (VTM) or Universal Transport Media (UTM) available to them, making sure to follow instructions on the testing materials and ensuring the vial is completely closed and sealed.

If an employee on the oil rig tests positive for COVID-19, should we isolate them on the rig or send them home?

According to the CDC, it is safer to remove the worker from the rig. Patients can be more safely isolated in a hospital or home setting, and it's better to have the patient close to medical care in the event that that person's health worsens.

Is everyone who dies being tested for COVID-19?

The only decedents who should be tested for COVID-19 by a coroner are those people who die with respiratory symptoms that are suggestive of a COVID-19, AND who did not have a link to someone with a known COVID-19. There is no need to test those who die of a "COVID-19-like" illness if they have been associated with another case (we'll consider this a COVID-19 death). In addition, there is no need to test for COVID-19 in a person who did not die of a severe respiratory illness suggestive of COVID-19.

What determines whether or not a fatality is attributed to COVID-19?

When we've counted a death as a COVID-19 death it means there has been a positive test result. It does not necessarily mean it is the cause of death. The cause of death could be a combination of COVID-19 and underlying conditions/complications.

If I need to get tested for COVID-19, how much will it cost?

The treating physician determines where the test is sent for analysis. And, the State is preparing to test more broadly as the federal government expands its testing guidelines. Testing at the state lab is no- cost, but there are criteria for testing at the state lab.

Today, most testing is being conducted by private labs, and there is a cost. These commercial tests are covered under Medicare, Medicaid, and by most insurance companies as an essential health benefit, and the cost varies depending on your coverage. We are unsure at this point if people without insurance will be charged for a test done by a private lab.

Do immigrants have access to testing regardless of identification?

The testing criteria for COVID-19 do not require showing official government identification. Everyone, including documented and undocumented immigrants, who are experiencing symptoms such as fever, cough or shortness of breath, you should contact their primary care physician for guidance to see if they fit the clinical criteria for testing.

I would like for my clinic to offer COVID-19 testing to the public. What do I need to do?

There are no state requirements for clinics that want to provide COVID-19 testing to the public. Clinics are responsible for ordering their testing supplies, contracting with a laboratory to analyze the results, developing the necessary processes and training to implement a testing program, communicating with the public about the site and its hours of operation, and providing the results to those who were tested.

I am interested in hosting a mobile test site at my office/facility/clinic/location. What do I need to do?

The Louisiana Office of Public Health, the Louisiana National Guard and local governments have been working together to set up mobile test sites. The goal is to make it as easy and convenient as possible for residents to get a test. For information about the need for, and to offer to host a site in your region, contact your OPH Regional Medical Director at: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/directory/category/13>

HEALTHCARE FACILITIES AND STAFFING

I am a medical provider and a member(s) of our staff has tested positive for COVID-19. What is the proper procedure for notifying our patients?

Providers should notify patients in such a situation that they may have been exposed to the coronavirus. However, they should not identify the staff member. They should also describe the steps they are taking to ensure a safe facility such as practicing social distancing, taking temperature checks of staff and Looking for respiratory symptoms. When a staff member has tested positive, that person self-isolates until he/she meets the guidelines for returning to work.

What is the guidance for a healthcare employee who has been exposed to COVID-19?

If this employee is critical to the medical care, response to COVID-19, or assistance with daily living, they can continue to work but they need to wear a mask at work, and monitor their health with 2x daily temperature checks.

If they feel ill (fever >100.4 and/or respiratory symptoms), they need to immediately leave work and self-isolate. They should also call their own healthcare provider for guidance about testing.

If this person is not part of the direct response to COVID-19, then they should go home, self-isolate, and monitor their symptoms, and call their healthcare provider to possibly be tested.

What is the guidance for healthcare employees with suspect or confirmed COVID-19?

Please use the following updated symptom-based strategy to return to normal activity. Continue isolation until:

- At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and,
- At least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared

EMPLOYERS AND COVID-19 TESTING

Is it a responsibility of employers to report positive test results of employees to the Department of Health?

No, positive tests (in and of themselves) of employees no longer need to be reported to LDH.

What prevents the health department from reporting cases at a more precise location than at the Parish level?

Federal healthcare privacy laws, better known as HIPAA, do not allow public health officials to disclose certain aspects of reportable diseases, such as addresses or locations of cases within a Parish. The law is designed to protect the identity of patients, ensuring their right to privacy. In addition, the information that is collected (such as address) does not help in disease control, as the person may have been exposed somewhere else.

COVID-19 is now “widespread” throughout Louisiana, and trying to pinpoint locations based on lab tests performed 5-8 days ago as a protective measure would not be effective.

Are employers required to notify employees if one employee tested positive for COVID-19?

No, there is no law or CDC guidance that requires an employer to notify others that someone else has tested positive for the virus. Each business can implement their own reporting requirements for their employees. Typical requirements include the employee notifying the employer that he/she tested positive for COVID-19 or if that person was exposed to someone with COVID-19. Employers should also proactively follow recommendations to make sure any ill employees stay home and close contacts of an employee who has tested positive for COVID-19 should quarantine at home for 14 days.

The Louisiana Department of Health’s contact tracers will only contact an individual who tested positive and that person’s close contacts (within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes over a 24-hour time period), which may include co-workers. If a place of business has two more positive employees, public health may follow-up to provide prevention recommendations.

I am concerned about a local businesses that has several employees who are sick because of COVID. How can people be alerted to such a business? What should I do to report this business?

Because of health privacy laws, businesses are not regulated for the health of their employees, and they are not required to notify others that an employee has tested positive for the virus. If you are concerned, talk to the owner of the business or do not frequent a business that makes you uncomfortable.

What do I do if my employer demands I get tested for COVID-19 if I was sick?

There are different rules/laws for private and public employers. In state government, an employee may be placed on sick leave and be required to stay home if he/she is ill for any reason. In the private sector, the employee should follow the directive of their employer.

What should I do if I am still experiencing COVID-19 symptoms after I have recovered and tested negative? Is this normal?

Recovery from COVID-19 is different for each person. For answers to your questions or your specific situation, you should contact your healthcare provider.

If a person tested positive for COVID-19 can they be re-infected?

There is evidence to suggest that some people have contracted the virus a second time. This means that all people – even those who have already had the illness – should remain vigilant and take the necessary precautions.

COVID-19 GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is coronavirus or COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is spread in three main ways:

- Breathing in air when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus.
- Having these small droplets and particles that contain virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze.
- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them.

How can I get the most up-to-date information about the pandemic?

The White House Task Force has established www.coronavirus.gov as the centralized website for the federal government. The CDC continues to maintain www.cdc.gov/covid19 site.

General public questions about COVID-19?

If you have questions about coronavirus, contact the Louisiana 211 Network: 2-1-1. This call line is available 24/7, M-F.

Who is most at risk for a severe illness from COVID-19?

According to the CDC, people of any age with certain underlying medical conditions are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Smoking/Vaping
- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)

Is COVID-19 fatal?

Yes, it can be fatal. In the U.S., more than 600,000 people have died from COVID-19 and worldwide, there have been more than 4 million deaths. Still, the majority of people who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 do recover.

The risk of death is highest for people who are 85 years and older. In fact, according to the CDC, compared with 18- to 29-year-olds, the rate of death is four times higher in 30- to 39-year-olds, and 600 times higher in those who are 85 years and older.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19: The following are the symptoms according to the CDC:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

What is the incubation period for COVID-19?

The incubation period for COVID-19 is about 5 days. The range is between 4 and 7 days, although it is sometimes quicker and it sometimes may take up to 14 days.

What steps should I take to protect myself and my family?

We all have a role in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The single most important things we can all do are stay home when we are sick, wear a mask over the mouth and nose, follow social distancing of 6 feet, washing hands vigorously and often, and coughing into the elbow.

MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

Are people required to wear masks or face coverings?

The updated mask guidance from Gov. Edwards still requires masks be worn at K-12 schools, early childhood education centers, colleges and universities, hospitals and nursing homes.

Is the Department of Health providing exemptions – a form – to people who do not want to use a mask when going to the doctor’s office or other places that require a face covering?

No, there is no such from the Louisiana Department of Health. LDH encourages all people to follow the masking and social distancing requirements put in place by any place of business, including medical facilities.

Are face shields an acceptable alternative for a face mask?

No, unfortunately. The lower part of the face shield is completely open and allows the free flow of the water droplets that carry COVID-19. CDC does not recommend them as an acceptable substitute to a face mask which covers the mouth and nose.

I have a mask with an exhalation valve. If I block the valve will my mask be as safe or safer than a cloth mask?

Yes. By blocking the valve, that mask is now is equivalent to a cloth mask.

How should I clean and store my face mask?

Cloth face masks should be washed regularly, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It is best to clean your mask in a washing machine or with soap and hot water. The mask should be dried completely. Dry it in a hot dryer, if possible.

TREATMENT

What is monoclonal antibody therapy?

If you test positive for COVID-19 and develop mild to moderate symptoms you can receive without having to go to the hospital. Monoclonal antibodies have also been authorized as a preventive therapy for people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and are at risk of hospitalization or death. In situations where people are unable to get the COVID vaccination, mAbs can be administered to adults and youth 12 years of age and older. For those who are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, getting the shot is the best way to protect against the virus.

Who may receive monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19?

Monoclonal antibodies, or MAbs, are man-made antibodies produced in a laboratory that can mimic the human immune system response to infection. MAbs have received FDA authorization for use during the pandemic. They may be used for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 in adults and pediatric patients who meet all of the following:

- Have a positive test for SARS-CoV-2 (molecular/PCR or antigen)
- Are within 10 days of the start of their symptoms
- Are at least 12 years of age or older and weigh at least 40 kilograms (88 pounds)
- Are at a high risk for progressing to severe COVID-19 and/or hospitalization
- MAbs have also been authorized as a preventive therapy for people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and are at risk of hospitalization or death.

What does “high risk” for progressing to severe COVID-19 or hospitalization” mean?

The following medical conditions or other factors may place adults and pediatric patients (Age 12-17 years and weighing at least 40 kg) at higher risk for progression to severe COVID-19:

- Older age (age ≥ 65 years of age)
- Obesity or being overweight (BMI >25 kg/m², or if age 12-17, have BMI ≥ 85 th percentile for their age and gender based on CDC growth charts, https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/clinical_charts.htm)
- Pregnancy
- Chronic kidney disease
- Diabetes
- Immunosuppressive disease or immunosuppressive treatment
- Cardiovascular disease (including congenital heart disease) or hypertension
- Chronic lung diseases (e.g., chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, moderate-to-severe asthma, interstitial lung disease, cystic fibrosis and pulmonary hypertension)
- Sickle cell disease
- Neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy) or other conditions that confer medical complexity (e.g., genetic or metabolic syndromes and severe congenital anomalies)
- Having a medical-related technological dependence (e.g., tracheostomy, gastrostomy, or positive pressure ventilation not related to COVID 19).

Where can I find a monoclonal antibody provider?

Patients need to be referred by their doctor or other healthcare provider to a facility that offers mAb therapy such as a hospital or an infusion center.

The federal government has developed a searchable national map that show locations of facilities that have received mAb shipments. See this link: [Therapeutics Distribution | HHS Protect Public Data Hub.](#)

A call center is available to answer questions and provide information related to monoclonal antibody therapeutic treatments at 1-877-332-6585 (English Language); 1-877-366-0310 (Spanish Language).

Can the drug Ivermectin, typically used to treat or prevent parasites in animals, be used to treat humans with COVID-19?

No. Ivermectin is not an anti-viral and it has not been approved to treat or prevent COVID-19, according to the Food and Drug Administration. The FDA has received reports of people who have been hospitalized or required treatment after taking ivermectin. It is dangerous to take a drug like ivermectin that is intended for use in animals like horses. The best way to avoid getting COVID-19 is to get a vaccine if you haven't already gotten one, wear a mask in public indoor places and practice social distancing.

Key information:

- Ivermectin is often used in the U.S. to treat or prevent parasites in animals.
- FDA has not approved ivermectin for use in treating or preventing COVID-19 in humans.
- Ivermectin is not an anti-viral (a drug for treating viruses).
- Taking large doses of this drug is dangerous and can cause serious harm.
- Never use medications intended for animals on yourself. Ivermectin preparations for animals are very different from those approved for humans.
- You can overdose on Ivermectin, which can cause nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hypotension (low blood pressure), allergic reactions (itching and hives), dizziness, ataxia (problems with balance), seizures, coma and even death.

***If you have already consumed ivermectin to treat COVID-19 please immediately consult with your healthcare provider or call the poison control center.

Is hydroxychloroquine, the anti-malaria drug, effective in treating COVID-19?

There is no defined answer. There have been some anecdotal reports that the drug may be effective, and others reports that it is not. There have been no tests done by the FDA to see two things: 1. Is the drug effective at curing COVID-19? and 2. Is the drug safe to give to COVID-19 patients?

Until these tests – known as clinical trials – are completed, most doctors are not prescribing this treatment. Always speak to your doctor before using a medication for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

Is it safe to take ibuprofen to treat symptoms of COVID-19?

CDC is currently not aware of scientific evidence establishing a link between NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen) and worsening of COVID 19. The World Health Organization, CDC and others continue to monitor the situation and will review new information as it becomes available. For those who wish to use treatment options other than NSAIDs, there are other over-the-counter and prescription medications approved for pain relief and fever reduction. Patients should speak to their healthcare provider for individualized management.

Is it true that elderberry (supplements, vitamins, etc.) can exacerbate the virus in your system?

COVID-19 is a new virus and there is limited evidence on what is effective or harmful to treat the virus. Always speak to your doctor before using a medication for a condition for which it was not prescribed.

Can you contract both the flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

It is possible to have both the coronavirus and the flu at the same time. The Louisiana Department of Health recommends that people should get a flu vaccine. To find a location to get a shot, go to the Vaccine Finder tool at <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/subhome/8>.

Can a breastfeeding mother with COVID pass the virus to their baby?

The transmission of the COVID-19 virus through breast milk and breastfeeding has not been detected. While breastfeeding, a mother should still implement appropriate hygiene measures, including wearing a medical mask if available, to reduce the possibility of droplets with COVID-19 being spread to her infant.

Does getting routine childhood vaccines make children more susceptible to COVID-19?

Childhood vaccines are the best protection against illnesses. Studies have never found a connection between a vaccine for one disease increasing the likelihood of getting another illness.

Are younger people at risk for a serious illness?

Younger people are still much less likely to die from COVID-19 than older people but they can develop serious COVID-19 illness requiring hospitalization.

Is the loss of the ability to smell or pink eye symptoms of COVID-19?

The novel coronavirus and COVID-19 are new, and we are still learning about the virus. For these symptoms and others, always contact your primary care physician for guidance.

I see people in my neighborhood out running, riding bikes and walking their dogs. Is that OK?

Yes, that's OK. Just be sure to maintain distance from other people. The CDC recommends a distance of about 6 feet. Even in communities where residents are being asked to stay home and "shelter in place," it's still fine to go for a run, hike or do other outdoor activities, as long as proper social distancing is observed. Wear a mask if you will be within 6 feet of others.

Do mosquitoes carry COVID-19/Can the virus be transmitted through mosquitoes?

No. COVID-19 is not transmitted by mosquitoes.

Do you encourage blood donations at this time?

Yes, click www.aabb.org to search for local blood donation clinics.

QUARANTINE REQUIREMENT UPDATE

Does a person/student still need to quarantine if they have taken an antibody test that confirms the presence of antibodies to COVID-19?

Positive antibody test results can't be used to exclude someone from quarantine since we're unable to say how far in the past they could have been infected. Schools should only accept viral tests for proof of infection in the last 90 days.

Does a person/student still need to quarantine if they are fully vaccinated?

No. CDC advises that fully vaccinated individuals who do not have any symptoms do not need to quarantine following an exposure to COVID-19. However:

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, even those who are fully vaccinated or without a known exposure should be tested.
- Anyone who tests positive should immediately isolate. Isolation (for those who test positive for COVID-19) typically consists of:
 - If symptomatic, at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, symptoms are improving, and at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication.
 - If asymptomatic but with a positive test, 10 days from the time the test sample was collected.

What about a child who was exposed to their parents who are COVID-positive, but the child is unable to isolate in the home. What is the guidance in this situation re: quarantine and return to school?

The child must stay home during the parents isolation period. If the child gets sick during this period, then the child needs to follow the protocol for a positive case.

If the child does not get sick (or test positive) during the parents isolation period, the child's quarantine begins the day AFTER his/her parents last day of isolation.

For example, if a parent tests positive today, the parent must stay in isolation for 10 days. The child would stay home during this 10 days, then begin their quarantine on day #11. The student should follow the school's recommendation for quarantine, which may be a full 14 day quarantine or may include the shortened quarantine options below:

- After 14 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop (gold standard) OR
- After 10 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, as long as no symptoms develop with daily monitoring through day 14 OR
- After 7 days of quarantine from the last day they were exposed, if the individual receives a COVID-19 negative test on day 5 or later after the parent's isolation period ends and no symptoms develop with daily monitoring through day 14.

**This Q&A was also added to the School section*

A person in a local office tested positive for COVID-19. Should that office be closed and should the employees who came in contact with the positive person quarantine?

The office does not need to be closed down. However, anyone who was a close contact of the person who tested positive should stay home for 14 days. A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of the positive person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. LDH also strongly encourages everyone in the office to be vaccinated and to follow the State mask order.

Are employers required to pay employees who must quarantine due to testing positive for COVID?

The decision to pay employees, not pay him or her, or require them to use sick or annual leave for time off to quarantine is at the discretion of each individual employer.

Why did the CDC decide to change their quarantine guidelines to shorten the quarantine period?

The CDC is allowing a reduction in the length of quarantine to increase compliance with quarantine guidelines and reduce some economic, personal and physical burdens on people.

Quarantine is intended to reduce the risk of an infected person unknowingly transmitting the virus to others. It also ensures that people who become symptomatic during quarantine can rapidly be evaluated and treated.

However, a 14-day quarantine can impose personal burdens that may affect physical and mental health as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance. And, the prospect of quarantine may keep people from naming contacts and may dissuade contacts from responding to contact tracer outreach if they perceive the length of quarantine as onerous.

What is the difference between quarantine and isolation?

Isolation and quarantine are both public health practices that are being utilized to limit the spread of COVID-19. While they are often used interchangeably, they have very different meanings.

Isolation is a strategy used to separate people who are sick with a contagious illness from those who are healthy. Isolation restricts the movement of people who are ill to help stop the spread of certain diseases.

People in isolation may be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or in designated healthcare facilities.

Quarantine is used to separate and restrict the movement of people who may have been exposed to a contagious illness, but do not have symptoms to see if they become sick. These individuals may or may not be contagious.

How do I count the days of quarantine from the last day of exposure to COVID-19?

Quarantine should start as soon as they know they have been exposed. When counting the quarantine days, the last day they were exposed is day 0, the first day following the last day of exposure is day 1 and quarantine continues through day 14.

As of December 7, 2020, The Louisiana Department of Health adopted CDC's updated shortening of the quarantine period from 14 days to 10 days if no symptoms have been reported with daily monitoring during the quarantine, or as few as 7 days if the person remains asymptomatic and tests negative on day 5 of quarantine or later. LDH maintains that a quarantine of 14 days is still preferred.

Do I or people in my family still have to quarantine for 14 days since the CDC changed their guidelines to 7 or 10 days?

No. As of December 7, 2020, The Louisiana Department of Health adopted CDC's new to shorten the quarantine period from 14 days to 10 days, or as few as 7 days with a negative test. A quarantine period of 14 days is still preferred, but there are options to shorten quarantine based on local circumstances and resources.

- Quarantine can end after 10 days, if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring.
- Quarantine can end after 7 days if the individual takes a COVID test on day 5 or later of quarantine (at home tests do not qualify), receives a negative result, and if no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring.

What is the risk if I or my family members decide to shorten our quarantine period from 14 days to 7 or 10 days? Is there anything more I/we should do?

Shorter quarantine periods do come with a risk that a person may be infectious when he or she leaves quarantine, and should be carefully evaluated when weighing options. LDH recommends the following for those deciding to shorten their quarantine periods:

- Daily symptom monitoring should continue through quarantine day 14.
- Individuals should adhere strictly to social distancing, avoiding crowded indoor spaces, hand washing, and especially wearing masks/face coverings when outside the home.
- Do not visit hospitals or to high-risk congregate facilities such as nursing homes until after 14 days.
- Any close contact who develops symptoms within the 14 days after exposure to a person with COVID-19 infection should get tested as soon as possible.

Do the new CDC guidelines with options to shorten the quarantine period apply to large groups of people living together (congregate settings) like nursing homes and correctional facilities?

Louisiana Department of Health is currently recommending the full 14-day quarantine period for residents of nursing homes and modified quarantine for correctional facilities. This is because even a small post-quarantine transmission risk could result in substantial secondary clusters in settings where there is a high risk for transmission.

What are the recommendations for a person who has been in close contacts with someone who tested positive for Covid-19?

- Help the patient follow their healthcare provider’s instructions for care. Help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient’s symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not need to be in the home.
- Household members should care for any pets in the home. Do not handle pets or other animals while sick.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The patient should wear a facemask when around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask, the caregiver should wear one when in the same room as the patient.
- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient’s blood, stool, or body fluids.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.

A person who tested positive for COVID-19 may end isolation when the following criteria are met:

- They are fever free with no medications for 24 hours, AND
- Symptoms improve, AND
- It has been 10 days since EITHER 1st symptom appeared OR date positive test administered (whichever comes first)

For answers to your specific situation, you should contact your physician.

CONTRACT TRACING

What is contact tracing. Is this being done in Louisiana?

Contact tracing is underway in Louisiana. It is a type of disease investigation. Trained interviewers talk to people who have been diagnosed with the virus and ask questions to determine who else they may have recently been in contact with. Then, they find those people who may have been exposed, and encourage them to quarantine themselves to prevent spreading the disease any further.

For more information, go to: <http://ldh.la.gov/ContactTracing>.

How do employers know the validity of letters/emails sent by a contact tracer to a person who has been told to quarantine because of exposure to COVID-19?

When a contact tracer notifies a person they have been exposed, they can request to receive an email from the contact tracer with a letter the person can provide to their employer. The letter will be on official State of Louisiana letterhead.

Will a contact tracer initiate contact with an individual by email or mail?

No, all contacts by contact tracers are initiated by text message from the number **225-396-5385** or by phone call from the number **1-877-766-2130**.

However, after this phone contact has been made, the person who has been exposed may require proof of the exposure for their employer. The contact can request a letter that they can give to their employer verifying they have been told to self-quarantine.

In addition, if a person is not successfully reached by phone, a letter may be sent to the individual by public health asking them to call.

I received an email or mailed letter regarding contact tracing but no one has called me. Why did this happen?

If an individual receives a letter from the Louisiana Department of Health, they should call the number back that was provided in the letter, which would be 1-877-766-2130 or a local Office of Public Health phone number.

If an individual receives a letter from the Louisiana Department of Health, they should call the number back that was provided in the letter, which would be 1-877-766-2130 or a local Office of Public Health phone number.

How does contact tracing work?

A contact tracer is a public health worker who attempts to identify all people who were exposed to someone with COVID-19. This is how it works:

- People who test positive will be called by a contact tracer.
- The contact tracer will ask questions about the person's health status, where they have traveled, who else they have been in contact with during the time the person was contagious.
- The contact tracer then notifies any close contacts that they have been exposed to the virus.
- Contact tracers will advise the close contacts to stay home, monitor their symptoms, and may advise them to get tested.
- To protect privacy, those who are called by a contact tracer are only informed that they may have been exposed to the virus on a certain date; they are not told the identity of the person who may have exposed them.

- Contact tracers will also try to link people who tested positive and their close contacts to important health and social services that might be needed while they are required to stay at home.

Who is considered to be a close contact?

A close contact is a person who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour time period starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the infected patient is isolated.

I tested positive but have not received a call from the contact tracer, what should I do?

Anyone who has recently tested positive but has not received a call from the contact tracing team can call 1-877-766-2130 to receive guidance and identify others who might have been exposed so that they can be notified of their exposure and prevent the illness from spreading.

I received a call or message from a contact tracer. Why do they want to talk to me?

The Louisiana Department of Health has a team of contract tracers who call anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 and anyone who might have been in close contact with someone known to have tested positive. If someone you know or have been in close contact with has tested positive, the contact tracing team will call you to see how you are feeling, if you are having any symptoms, offer support for getting tested, and provide information on how to self-quarantine.

How do I know if the contact tracer is from the Louisiana Department of Health and not a fraud or scammer trying to ask me personal questions?

The official Louisiana contact tracers will identify themselves as being from the Louisiana Department of Health. The caller ID on the phone should show "LA Health Dept." They will never ask you about your finances or other personal information. They will never ask you to buy any gift cards, or ask your banking information or social security number. If someone asks you any of these questions, hang up right away and do not give this information.

My doctor has not contacted me about my test results but I got a call from someone wanting to know about my whereabouts. Do I have to talk to them before I receive my results? Do I have to talk to them at all?

Sometimes the health department will get positive test results from a lab and call that person before their doctor gets a chance to call them with the results. The health department tries to call people as soon possible in order to share information about how to keep the illness from spreading to others. You can always ask the contact tracer to call you back after you've had a chance to call your doctor. You will not be required to speak to the health department about your results. However, we strongly encourage you to speak with the Louisiana Department of Health, because this is an important way to help keep yourself and others safe and to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Will the information I share with the contact tracer be kept confidential?

Yes. The health department contacts people who tests positive and their close contacts. The health department will not tell the contacts who tested positive or where they may have been when exposed, they will only share the date they were exposed. All information is kept private.

If I don't get contacted by a contact tracer, is that a sign that I have NOT come in contact with anyone who tested positive for Covid-19?

Unfortunately, no. You may have come in contact with someone who has tested positive, but they did not realize they were in close contact with you or they forgot to tell the contact tracing team. You may also have come in contact with someone who had a COVID-19 infection, but did not get tested. If you believe you may have been exposed in some way, take reasonable precautions to self-quarantine and call your primary care provider.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

How long can the virus stay on hard surfaces, cardboard and fabrics?

Studies suggest that coronavirus can survive on metal for up to five days, on glass for four to five days, and plastic for up to nine days, according to a recent study by the Journal of Hospital Infection. The same studies show coronavirus can survive up to 24 hours on cardboard.

It is not clear yet, but the virus may have a shorter lifespan on fabrics than on hard surfaces. For all surfaces, the best bet is to clean visibly dirty areas, then use enough disinfectant for the surface you're cleaning to remain wet for several minutes.

Can COVID-19 be spread through exposure to fecal matter, urine, and sewage?

The virus spreads mostly through respiratory droplets and contact with infected patients. But new research suggests that it can also spread through feces. The best prevention is to wash your hands and avoid touching your face.

Should I wear gloves to protect myself from the coronavirus? Do they offer any added protection?

Although gloves do create a barrier between the virus and your hands, they are not recommended for general, everyday use. There are several reasons why gloves might make you less safe.

Wearing gloves might cause you to practice worse hand hygiene because you keep wearing the now- dirty gloves instead of washing your hands.

You are just as likely to touch your face with or without a glove.

Since most phones cannot be controlled with gloved fingers, you are likely to take the gloves off and on to use your phone. Doing this will then contaminate your hands when you remove the glove.

Why, then, are gloves used in healthcare settings?

Remember, gloves are a barrier between your hands and the virus. When healthcare workers use them, gloves are disposed of immediately after each use. Healthcare workers are taught how to remove gloves safely, dispose of them and wash their hands afterward.

The most important precaution taken by healthcare workers, and the practice we all should follow, is to practice good hand hygiene.

Coronavirus is noted on Lysol bottles. Why is Covid-19 categorized as new if listed on old Lysol bottles?

Should the public expect any new commercially available disinfectant products to address Covid-19?

Coronaviruses are a family of viruses, and they are not new. There were six existing strains of coronavirus before 2019, some of which cause the common cold. The latest strain, however, is nCoV- 2019 (COVID-19) which originated in 2019.

Lysol bottles are not referencing the latest COVID-19, but instead the coronaviruses that cause the common cold. There is no reason to believe, though, that Lysol is not effective for COVID-19, so please use it!

What are the best items to use to clean surfaces and protect from COVID-19?

COVID-19 does not require any unique cleaning chemicals to disinfect surfaces. Soap and water works, and you can use an alcohol-based wipe. Baby wipes may not be effective.

Is it safe to receive a package from an area where COVID-19 has been reported?

Yes. The likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package that has been moved, traveled, and exposed to different conditions and temperature is also low.

RETURN TO WORK/EMPLOYMENT

When can I return to work?

Individual businesses are now making decisions about when and how their workforce can return. Check with your employer for specific guidance about your job. The Louisiana Department of Health has developed guidance for employers and employees of essential businesses about safely returning to work. The guidance is on www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click on Guidance & Resources.

Is there any guidance for businesses about the current restrictions?

Yes, the State Fire Marshall has developed the Open Safely website. On this site, you can find guidance for the following businesses/activities: Outdoor Sports, General Businesses, Fitness Center/Health Clubs, Libraries, Movie Theaters, Museums/Zoos/Aquariums, Places of Worship, Restaurants and Salons/Barber Shops.

Also, CDC has developed a comprehensive list of questions and answers, guidance and support for businesses as they begin to plan how to safely reopen. See this website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html> On the page is information about:

- How to Address and Reduce COVID-19 in the Workplace
- Maintaining Healthy Business Operations
- Cleaning and Disinfection in the Workplace
- Critical Infrastructure

I am not sure if it is safe for me to return to work. Where or who should I talk to about my concerns?

LDH recommends that any concerns you have about your health, testing practices or your organization's return to work policies should be discussed with your healthcare provider and your employer.

My coworkers and I all spend most of our days working in cubicles answering phones. We are required to wear a mask by our employer. But, wearing a mask or other face covering causes muffled communications when we are talking to callers. Is it OK not to wear a mask while doing our work?

As you are aware, speaking is an activity which increases the risk of COVID-19 spread. In addition, the longer someone speaks, the more likely it is that someone who is asymptomatic will spread the disease to those in close proximity. Although the callers are working from cubicles, this does not effectively contain the spread. Therefore, the Louisiana Department of Health recommends that these employees wear a mask while at work.

I have an employee who tested positive. Do I need to notify customers or clients?

If the employee with the positive test had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes over a 24-hour time period) with any customers or clients, those individuals will be contacted by a contact tracer with the Louisiana Department of Health. The contact tracer will ask questions about the employee's health status, where they have traveled, who else they have been in contact with during the time the person was contagious. The contact tracer will then notify any close contacts that they have been exposed to the virus. The positive employee may also call the contact tracers if they have not yet received a call at 1-877-766-2130. Employers should also proactively follow recommendations to make sure any ill employees stay home and close contacts of an employee who is positive for COVID-19 quarantine at home for 14 days.

Will my business be contacted by the Department of Health if one of my employees tests positive?

The Louisiana Department of Health's contact tracers will only contact the individual who tested positive and that person's close contacts. If a place of business has two or more positive employees, public health

may follow-up to provide prevention recommendations. Each business can implement their own reporting requirements for their employees. Typical requirements include notification of the employer by the employee if that person tested positive for COVID-19 or if that person was exposed to someone with COVID-19. Employers should also proactively follow recommendations to make sure any ill employees stay home and close contacts of an employee who is positive for COVID-19 quarantine at home for 14 days.

What can a business do if an employee is refusing to return to work?

Individual businesses are now making decisions about when and how their workforce can return. Check with your employer for specific guidance about your job. Employees follow the directives of their employer. In a situation in which an employee is refusing to return to work, the employer can make a report to the Louisiana Workforce Commission using the online form found at:

https://www2.laworks.net/CAREsact/UI_ROW_Create.asp?fbclid=IwAR2jzevs2ao-_aSoXiHvECs8As3wyBLU7wh801wLob1VkBTQI1RVD02EODQ

Where I work, an employee's spouse tested positive for COVID-19. Is there a quarantine period for that employee before they can return to work?

The Department of Health advises people who have been a close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes over a 24-hour time period) of a known case, to self-quarantine at home for 14 days and monitor for symptoms. If someone is a contact of a contact, that person should monitor themselves for symptoms. For answers to your specific situation, you should contact your physician.

If you have a known exposure to someone with COVID-19 “close contact,” you should quarantine for

- 14 days from the day of exposure and monitor for symptoms OR
- 10 days if you remain asymptomatic but continue monitoring for symptoms for 14 days OR
- 7 days if you remain asymptomatic and get tested on day 5 post exposure or later and receive a negative test result, but continue monitoring for symptoms for 14 days.

The only way a close contact does not have to quarantine is if they are fully vaccinated and do not have any symptoms (except for a few settings such as nursing homes) or they actually had COVID-19 (with a positive test) within the last 90 days.

I am an office worker but my company is near the top of a high-rise building. What about the risk of riding in elevators, or simply pushing the buttons?

CDC guidance is to limit use and occupancy of elevators to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet. Elevator buttons, like doors, doorknobs, faucets, and water fountains, must be cleaned frequently.

The only way I can get to work is on public transportation and that doesn't feel particularly safe to me right now. Can that be grounds for continuing to work at home?

Generally, the workplace is your employer's responsibility; how you get there is yours. If you use public transportation, the CDC advises you to:

- Practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Wash your hands before and right after your ride, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.
- Wear a mask, practice social distancing. During travel, try to keep at least 6 feet from people who are not in your household.

What does the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say about reopening workplaces?

The CDC has its own guidelines for employers: Stop handshaking; facilitate hand washing at the door and send emails to employees at regular intervals reminding them to wash their hands; remind employees to

avoid touching their faces and to cover coughs and sneezes; disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly.

The full guidance can be found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>

Are there any other recommendations for employees and employers?

Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible; when not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces; consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings; and assess the risks of business travel. Employers should also ensure strict hygiene in cafeterias. Other recommendations include adding space between workers and staggering work schedules. Employees should not share phones, desks, offices, work tools, or equipment, when possible.

When can I return to work if: 1) I have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, or 2) I have been diagnosed with COVID and recovered, or 3) I had COVID symptoms but was not diagnosed with the virus?

The Louisiana Department of Health has developed a decision-making tool to help you know when to safely return to work if you have had any type of COVID exposure, illness or positive test result. The tool can be found on LDH website at: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3878> **Return to Work Guidance.**

What is the guidance for restaurant employees?

Restaurants must follow these directives: Employees who are sick with a fever or respiratory symptoms should not go to work at the restaurant.

For all other employees:

- Wash hands frequently.
- Do not touch customers' hands when passing food or drinks.
- Use gloves for contact with money or credit cards. Gloves must be replaced between each customer interaction. If gloves are not available, then hand sanitizer between each customer interaction is acceptable.
- Clean all frequently touched items, including keypads/touch screens at least hourly.
- Wear gloves to handle money when clearing the register/cash drawer.

How should employees communicate with other employees that they may have been exposed because of another employee without violating HIPPA?

Any person can self-report their own health status. However, people should refrain from discussing the health status others. Medical professionals cannot discuss another person's health status without being in violation of privacy laws.

What if someone at my work, school, church has been exposed to someone with COVID-19?

Exposed persons should self-isolate at home. People who were in contacts with that person should monitor their health. They should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Testing is recommended, but will be based on availability.

PRECAUTIONS

Can COVID spread while swimming?

Experts don't believe the virus can spread very easily through the water, whether it is salt water or chlorinated swimming pool water. The virus isn't going to move across the water from one person to another. The risk, however, is getting too close to others while in the pool. That's the same risk as if you are not in a pool.

I am concerned that some businesses that I frequent are not following the social distancing, wearing masks and other COVID-19 mandates from the Governor. Is there an agency that follows up on whether or not businesses are complying with these mandates?

If someone has a concern about a business that has reopened and is not following state guidelines related to social distancing, crowd control, capacity, etc. they can call the Louisiana Office of State Fire Marshal at 1-800-256-5452.

Is there help for other businesses and programs that are ready to reopen safely?

Yes, the CDC has developed tools to help entities that are ready to reopen understand the considerations and make the best decisions. The Louisiana Department of Health has added these decision-making tools to its Coronavirus COVID-19 Guidance & Resources website at: www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus/ Just click on Guidance and Resources.

Restaurants?

You should always try to decrease your risks. If the restaurant offers outdoor seating, use that option because eating outside is safer. You should also judge the establishment to get a sense as to how seriously they take these precautions. If you see people crowding around one another and not maintaining 6 feet of social, you may be more at risk at this establishment. It's not worth the risk.

Another, but less common, way to catch the virus is when you touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on. You may touch a countertop or doorknob that's contaminated and then touch your nose, mouth, or eyes. The virus can live on surfaces like plastic and stainless steel for 2 to 3 days.

For this reason, we encourage people to clean and disinfect all counters, knobs, and other surfaces you and your family touch several times a day, and to wash your hands anytime you touch a surface or after picking up packages/meals from a site like a restaurant or distribution site.

How long can the virus live on food from restaurants?

The coronavirus can be spread in a public restaurant as it can be spread in any public space. If you're about to eat, wash your hands. Wash your hands after using the restroom. If you're concerned about the cleanliness of your table, ask the server to wipe it down for you. COVID-19 is spread from person to person. If there is an infected person in that area, then both person-to-person transmission can occur as well as transmission from a contaminated surface if someone touches it and then touches their face.

Are Louisiana's State Parks open?

Yes. All Louisiana State Parks have reopened. For the most up-to-date information about Louisiana State Parks visit LaStateParks.com, or follow Louisiana State Parks on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Why are large events/family gatherings discouraged?

A recent study looked at two family gatherings, a funeral and a birthday party. The researchers found the virus was transmitted not only between those who attended the funeral, but continued to be transmitted to attendees of the separate birthday party. In all, 16 people were infected within a three- day period. This evidence shows transmission quickly occurs beyond household contacts, including the potential for super-spreading events.

What should families do who share custody?

Families are free to allow their children to visit/stay with their caretakers. Simply follow social distancing and hygiene recommendations.

Travel within the US?

Because cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have been reported in all states, depending on your unique circumstances, you may choose to delay or cancel your plans. The CDC offers travel guidance at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

If you do decide to travel, be sure to take steps to help prevent getting and spreading COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases during travel.

Crowded travel settings, like airports, may increase chances of getting COVID-19, if there are other travelers with coronavirus infection.

What should people do who are returning from countries with high COVID-19 activity?

If you were in a country with a COVID-19 outbreak, you should self-isolate for 14 days after your return. If you do not experience any sickness (fever, cough, difficulty breathing) after 14 days, you may resume your regular activities and use the same usual precautions to prevent spread of viruses like the flu (wash hands frequently, cough /sneeze into your elbow, disinfect surfaces).

What is the risk of getting COVID-19 on a plane?

Because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, most viruses and other germs do not spread easily. Although the risk of infection on an airplane is low, try to avoid contact with sick passengers, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

The CDC offers travel guidance at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Hotels, Air BNB, Condos?

Make sure that wherever you stay, that the business – Airbnb, hotel or condo operator – are thoroughly cleaning and wiping everything down between guests. This includes cleaning hard surfaces, door handles, bathrooms.

You should also wipe things down yourself with a clean, sanitized cloth rag. The biggest risk is when you are in the lobby when you are checking in or leaving. Be sure to keep distance between yourself and others. You want to make sure you are wearing your mask and that other people are wearing their masks. That will increase your safety.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

Can people be admitted into community-based residential care facilities?

Yes. Facilities such as residential substance use disorder treatment facilities, psychiatric residential treatment facilities [PRTFs] and therapeutic group homes should continue to provide these essential services to both existing and newly-admitted patients.

These facilities should provide services as long as such individuals can be managed safely in those settings, are not at risk for more severe medical outcomes or respiratory disease, and are not in need of more acute or higher levels of medical care.

Can inpatient and residential facilities combine residents of several homes/units if staffing is not available?

Because of the high infection rate of COVID-19 and the increased vulnerability of people with disabilities to have serious reactions due to complications, people should not be forced into settings that would increase social interaction beyond recommended levels. Instead, people should be moved into community-based settings, if possible.

How should facilities monitor or restrict healthcare facility staff?

The same screening performed for visitors should be performed for facility staff. Staff with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection should not report to work.

Any staff who develop signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection while on the job should immediately stop work, put on a facemask and self-isolate at home.

Should inpatient and residential facility community activities be limited for all people or should it be a person-centered decision?

Community activities should be limited in accordance with current CDC guidance and other state and federal requirements. Nationally, the CDC has advised individuals should practice social distancing, avoid gatherings of more than 10 individuals for high-risk populations and go into the community only for essential activities.

When a resident has tested positive for COVID-19 and quarantine procedures are implemented, severe behaviors are likely to occur. How should this be addressed?

The health and safety of the residents, visitors and staff are the highest priority. For residents who have been found positive for COVID-19 virus, the resident's treatment plan should include what specific procedures and steps should be taken for quarantine of the resident while also taking every step reasonable to protect the rights, safety and health of the infected residents as well as staff and other residents.

How should facilities screen visitors and outside healthcare service providers?

Facilities should actively screen and restrict visitation or healthcare service providers (e.g. contract therapist) by those who meet the following criteria:

- Signs or symptoms of a respiratory infection such as fever, cough or difficulty breathing.
- Contact with someone with or under investigation for COVID-19 or ill with respiratory illness.
- International travel within the last 14 days to countries with widespread or ongoing community spread.

- Residence in a community where community-based spread of COVID-19 is occurring.

When should mental health and substance use disorder treatment facilities consider transferring a client/resident with suspected or confirmed infection with COVID-19 to a hospital?

Decisions regarding when a given resident with suspected or confirmed infection with COVID-19 should be transferred to a hospital must be made on a case-by-case basis, and must be informed by the resident's medical status and acuity, as well as by the facility's ability to care for, monitor and provide medically necessary services related to the resident's medical and behavioral health needs.

When should a facility accept from a hospital a resident who was diagnosed with COVID-19?

A facility can accept a resident diagnosed with COVID-19 and still operate under transmission- based precautions for COVID-19 as long as the facility can follow CDC guidance for Transmission-Based Precautions. If a facility cannot follow the guidance, it must wait until these precautions are discontinued. Facilities should admit any individuals that they would normally admit to their facility who are not symptomatic, including individuals from hospitals where a case of COVID-19 was/is present if they are able to adhere to the infection prevention and control practices recommended by the CDC.

If possible, facilities should dedicate a wing or room/s for any residents coming or returning from the hospital. This can serve as a step-down unit where they remain for 14 days with no symptoms.

SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND WHO ARE AGING

I have a disability and can't leave my home. How do I get tested?

The Department of Health has an online link to testing sites at www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus. Click on the testing site tab to find a nearby location.

If you have Medicaid, your managed care organization can arrange transportation to a test site. If you do not have Medicaid, check with your support provider or your primary care provider for an order for a home health agency to come out and take the swab for testing.

You can also call 225-342-0095 Monday through Friday 8:00-4:30 to talk with someone directly, or leave a message outside business hours.

I receive disability services through the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and I have questions regarding changes to those services during the COVID-19 emergency. Who do I contact regarding this?

- Email OCDD-HCBS@la.gov, and someone will respond to your question.
- Call OCDD 225-342-0095 Monday through Friday 8:00-4:30 to talk with someone directly, or leave a message outside business hours.

I provide disability services through the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), and I have questions regarding the changes in services during the COVID-19 emergency. Who should I contact with these questions?

- Email OCDD-HCBS@la.gov, and someone will respond to your question.
- Call OCDD Monday through Friday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm to speak with someone, or leave a message outside business hours.

Are direct service workers who work with people with disabilities considered essential and allowed to work during the stay at home order?

Yes, direct service workers are considered essential and are allowed to travel to and from the home of the person they serve. Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities has put out guidance, as well as a letter authorizing travel during the COVID-19 emergency.

Are all Adult Day Cares/Home and Community Based centers required to follow the Governor's order to remain closed?

All Adult Day Care (ADC), Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) and Program for All-inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) centers were closed effective March 23, 2020 at 5 PM and they have remained closed.

Providers will be informed when they are allowed to reopen and will receive guidance on precautions, limitations, and requirements related to reopening.

I run a community home for people with developmental disabilities. We have a resident who has been hospitalized for COVID-19 and is now being sent home. We do not have the facilities for the resident to have a private room or bathroom. How do we provide care during the resident's 14-day quarantine?

The Louisiana Department of Health has issued guidance about the release of patients into nursing facilities, and has also issued guidance about safely supporting someone in quarantine. Go to LDH's COVID-19 website and click "Provider Information," and the Office for Citizens with Developmental

Disabilities COVID-19 Information page for additional guidance.

My agency provides in-home support to people with developmental disabilities. It not possible to remain 6 feet away from clients while assisting them. A person that my agency provides support to has tested positive for COVID, and they have returned home. How can my staff and the people we support remain safe in this situation?

OCDD has issued guidance about how to stay safe during quarantine. This information has been placed on the website under COVID-19 Information. Additionally, LDH has a Provider Information page to give guidance to providers regarding safety measures to put in place while providing in-home support.

I have questions about the services I receive through the state's Office of Aging. Who do I call or contact for information?

People who have questions can call or email the Office of Aging and Adult Services at:

- Phone: 1-866-758-5035
- Email: OAAS.Inquiries@la.gov

For a halfway house, what precautions should be taken for/by new residents?

New and current residents should follow the Governor's stay at home order which directs people to avoid going out in public unless it is absolutely necessary, such as getting groceries, food and medications.

Residents are encouraged to go outside and to stay active during this time, as long as they practice social distancing (at least 6 feet of physical space from other people) when they are around their neighbors and practice good hygiene by washing hands often and well with soap and water.

If a new resident has symptoms, they should not interact with other residents for 14 days and until they are symptom-free. Create a place in the home where that person can be isolated from others.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

For the LDH coronavirus dashboard, Is the Department collecting data by race for people counted in Cases, Persons Tested, Deaths and Persons Under Investigation?

For routine lab tests, both for the State and by commercial laboratories, race is not a collected field. Therefore, the State will not have this data from routine lab testing.

However, for more serious cases (such as deaths), as the pandemic progresses and we have reliable numbers, the State is planning to release these statistics.

When checking someone for a fever, what is the normal temperature for a child or adolescent?

Anything above 100.4 should be considered a "fever." However, we recommend a second temperature check for that person if they have been exerting themselves (running), or in the sun for a period of time and their temperature is more than 100.4. It can be rechecked after a few minutes of calm or shade.

Are counseling services available to the public?

Counseling services are now available at the Keeping Calm during Covid Phone Line. Counselors provide information and service coordination with linkage to mental health and substance use counseling services. Call 1-866-310-7977 | Available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week. All calls confidential.

How to apply for Medicaid?

Local Medicaid offices are currently closed to the public. Anyone who thinks they may be eligible for Medicaid can apply online: [MyMedicaid.la.gov](https://www.mymedicaid.la.gov). You can also apply by:

- Phone: 1-888-342-6207
- Mail: Louisiana Medicaid, P.O. Box 91283, Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Am I at risk of losing Medicaid coverage during the COVID-19 emergency?

No current Medicaid member will lose coverage for any reason other than death, permanently moving out of state, or requesting to end coverage. Medicaid applications have been streamlined to ensure anyone eligible for Medicaid who needs health care coverage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has access to coverage.

Can I use my Louisiana Medicaid card to receive medical services in Texas (out of state)? Am I covered beyond prescription services?

Yes, your out of state provider will need to enroll with Louisiana Medicaid in order to treat you and be reimbursed for your care. Please ensure the provider you choose follows all Louisiana published guidance here: www.ldh.la.gov/laura or they can contact the Louisiana Medicaid Customer Service Center at 1-888-342-6207.

I lost my prescriptions that were recently filled. Can I get refills with my Medicaid card (in Louisiana or out of state)?

Try to fill all prescriptions in the state of Louisiana. If you filled them last at a chain pharmacy, stop at a different location of the same chain pharmacy and give them your name and date of birth, sometimes they can access the records. It is up to the pharmacist's professional judgement on whether or not to fill the prescriptions. Your prescriber can call in a prescription at any pharmacy that is open. You can go to a clinic to get new prescriptions if necessary.

EMERGENCY FOOD BENEFITS (SNAP)

Can I still receive WIC benefits? Is WIC still open for enrollment?

Most WIC clinics are open and some are operating in drive-thru fashion. They are collecting information via phone then a staff member will come to your vehicle. Be sure to have your ID, WIC EBT card, and any other needed documents. Call your clinic or 1-800-251-2229 if you have any questions.

Is WIC issuing new cards?

If WIC participants already have a card, they should keep that card. If someone is newly applying to WIC, they will be issued a card. WIC is not issuing disaster cards.

Did Congress pass a bill that includes emergency food aid?

Yes, on March 18, the U.S. Senate approved and the President signed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which includes additional food assistance for some families in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

DCFS preparing to implement these new provisions and will provide additional information in the coming days on www.dcfsla.gov/getSNAP

Are we going to have D-SNAP (Disaster SNAP) benefits?

There is no D-SNAP at this time. The federal government appears to be pursuing other possible options for additional food assistance. If any of those options receive federal approval and become available, DCFS will make announcements on its DCFS website and Facebook page.

What food assistance is available to me right now?

If you are not a current SNAP recipient, you can apply online for benefits. More information can be found at www.dcfsla.gov/getSNAP.

I'm quarantined and/or staying home as advised by officials. Do I have to go into an office to apply for SNAP?

No, you don't have to visit a DCFS office to apply for SNAP! You can apply online or by downloading a paper application and then mailing or faxing it to us. You can also request an application by contacting DCFS at LaHELPU.DCFS@la.gov or 1-888-LAHelpU (1-888-524-3578) toll free. For instructions on how to apply, visit www.dcfsla.gov/getSNAP.

Where can I get a birth certificate? I have evacuated out-of-state and need to get my child registered for school, and a birth certificate is required? Where/how can I get this document?

Anyone can request a Louisiana Birth certificate from the Louisiana Department of Health's Vital Records' online portal <https://ldh.la.gov/vitalrecords> and then click on Obtain Birth/Death Certificate, or by calling 504-593-5100.

Where can I get a vaccine records? I have evacuated out-of-state and need to get my child registered for school, and vaccine records are required? Where/how can I get this information?

Anyone can request a Louisiana vaccination records at: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3641>

You can also go to this site: <http://myir.net>

Where can I get information concerning the safety of residential care facilities and other congregate housing? What happens or what should I do if one of the staff or residents are sick and/or have tested positive for COVID-19.

All residential care facilities (nursing homes and assisted living facilities) follow strict guidance for the isolation of residents with COVID-19, staffing and testing requirements and reporting requirements. Apartments, including those that serve seniors, are not required to follow the same requirements.

Those who live in apartments should take the necessary personal precautions to protect themselves including staying at home as much as possible, practicing good hygiene, keep at least 6 feet apart from others and wear a mask when leaving your apartment. If you feel sick, you should contact your healthcare provider.

Is there grant or stimulus money available to families for burial assistance for certified COVID-19 deaths?

There was some money in the Stimulus Package that was passed right before Christmas. We currently do not have guidance from FEMA on how this will be implemented in Louisiana.

Can funeral services still be held?

A funeral or visitation service can be held for a person who has died of COVID-19. Funeral home workers should follow their routine infection prevention and control precautions when handling a decedent who died of COVID-19.

The Louisiana Department of Health has posted additional guidance about funerals and the proper handling of decedents who have had COVID-19 at www.lah.gov/coronavirus. Just click on Guidance & Resources.

Am I at risk if I go to a funeral or visitation service for someone who died of COVID-19?

There is currently no known risk associated with being in the same room at a funeral or visitation service with the body of someone who died of COVID-19.

The Louisiana Department of Health has posted additional guidance about funerals and the proper handling of decedents who have had COVID-19 at www.lah.gov/coronavirus. Just click on Guidance & Resources.

How do COVID-19 deaths compare to deaths from the flu?

LDH and the CDC do not know the exact number of people who die from the flu each year for several reasons: Influenza deaths are not a reportable disease for people 18 years and older, they are not listed on death certificates and most people who die from flu-related complications are not tested for flu, or they seek medical care later in their illness when influenza can no longer be detected from respiratory samples. Flu deaths in children are known because these are nationally reported to the CDC.

Are "Probable Deaths" included in the "Deaths Reported" total?

No. On the LDH coronavirus dashboard, the number listed for deaths are confirmed COVID-19 related deaths. The probable death number is not included and reported separately on the dashboard.

The number of probable deaths can change on any day if a death is confirmed as COVID-19 with a positive test, or if a negative test result is received then the death would no longer be considered a probable death.

Will unemployment benefits and/or a stimulus check as a result of COVID-19 public health emergency be

used in determining Louisiana Medicaid Long Term Care eligibility or continued eligibility?

No. Louisiana Medicaid Long Term Care or waiver recipients who received an additional \$600 weekly unemployment benefits and or a stimulus check under the CARES Act are exempt from this income being counted as a resource for 12 months after they receive it.

What can I do if my landlord is trying to evict me because I can't pay my rent right now?

Your landlord must get a court order to evict you, and it is illegal for your landlord to lock you out, dispose of your belongings or cut off your utilities without going through the court eviction process.

President Biden has issued a federal eviction moratorium that prevents residential evictions through March 31, 2021. If you live in a multifamily building or single-family home that has a federally backed mortgage, late fees are prohibited.

Eviction courts have been suspended in Louisiana until at least April 30, 2020.

If you have been served with legal papers regarding eviction, contact an attorney for assistance. For more information on how to find an attorney and a list of legal services offices in Louisiana, visit www.Louisianalawhelp.org “

Louisiana Housing Corporation resources for renters impacted COVID-19

- <https://www.lhc.la.gov/covid19-renter-resources>
- https://www.lhc.la.gov/hubfs/LHC_COVID-19%20Help%20for%20Renters_04-24-2020-1.pdf

I have heard that blood donations are needed. What will the blood be used for and how can I help?

Blood centers are seeking plasma donations from people who have had COVID-19 and are fully recovered. Those who have recovered have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus in other people.

Known as convalescent plasma, this type of blood donation is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those who are at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening disease.

If you are interested, contact your nearest blood center.

Is it OK to use laundry facilities?

Of course. Just be sure to take basic precautions including:

- Don't enter a laundry if there are more than 10 other customers.
- Use disinfectant wipes to clean surfaces such as folding tables, chairs and the handles on the machines.

Is standard laundry detergent enough to disinfect clothing and prevent spread of the virus?

Yes. You can launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items. Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard the gloves after each use.

Can pets get or transmit COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. It is rare for an animal to infect people and then spread between people such as with recent outbreaks of MERS and SARS. Nevertheless, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is not considered a threat to dogs and cats, and pets do not play a role in transmission of the virus to people.

I have seen reports that some cats have gotten coronavirus. Can cats spread the virus?

Because there is not much known about pets and the coronavirus, the CDC recommends the following precautions:

- Do not let pets interact with people or other animals outside the household.
- Keep cats indoors when possible to prevent them from interacting with other animals or people.
- Walk dogs on a leash, maintaining at least 6 feet from other people and animals.
- Avoid dog parks or public places where a large number of people and dogs gather.
- If you are sick with COVID-19 (either suspected or confirmed by a test), restrict contact with your pets and other animals, just like you would around other people.
- When possible, have another member of your household care for your pets while you are sick.
- Avoid contact with your pet, including petting, snuggling, being kissed or licked, and sharing food or bedding.

If you must care for your pet or be around animals while you are sick, wear a cloth face covering and wash your hands before and after you interact with them.

Is there special guidance for people who are deaf or blind?

If you are not feeling well, stay home. Do not put yourself or support service provider (SSP) at risk.

- Touch support service provider only on shoulder or elbow for guiding techniques. Avoid touching support service provider hands or face aside from communicating.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Wash hands immediately after communication interaction.
- Let your SSP know if you need to sneeze/cough so they can put distance between you. Carry and use hand sanitizer in between as needed.
- Allow your SSP to sit/stand on the side of you as much as is comfortable instead of face to face to limit contact of skin and/or bodily fluids.
- Attempt to stand as far apart from your SSP as is comfortable

Important: Patients who have severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing, should seek emergency care immediately. Use Video Relay Services, or ask family/friends to contact for you. If necessary, contact the Interpreting/SSP office for assistance.

Are there any grants available to small businesses for COVID 19-related expenses?

Yes. State Treasurer John M. Schroder has announced a program that will help cover COVID 19-related expenses, The Main Street Recovery Program allows businesses to apply for up to \$15,000 to cover eligible expenses. In the first 21 days of the program, grants will be given to businesses who didn't receive a Paycheck Protection Program loan, insurance payment or an Economic Injury Disaster loan. In the first 60 days, \$40 million will go to businesses owned by women, minorities and veterans.

For more information on Main Street, visit www.latreasury.com

The Louisiana Economic Development staffs a help desk that provides email and hotline support for Louisiana businesses impacted by COVID-19.

The email is LEDbiz@la.gov

Toll-free hotline: 833-457-0531. Staffed 8 a.m. - 8 p.m. M-F.

For businesses seeking federal financial assistance, contact the U.S. Small Business Administration at SBA.gov/Disaster, or call 800- 659-2955. The TTY line is 800-877-8339.

Is there a protocol in place to report a business that isn't taking any effort to clean their store, despite having employees who tested positive for COVID-19?

People should avoid any place in which they have a concern. When you visit a business, take the necessary precautions: wear a mask or other face covering, bring your own disinfecting wipes to the store, try "contactless" shopping by ordering and paying. And, stay home as much as possible.

The CDC offers guidance for cleaning and disinfection for businesses at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/> Click on Resources for Business and Employers.

Can individuals report a store price gouging or scams?

The Louisiana Attorney General operates the Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-351-4889.

How can I report possible fraud related to related to COVID-19 products?

The FDA has created an online way to report illegal selling of drugs (for humans and animals), medical devices, biological products, foods, dietary supplements or cosmetics.

<https://www.fda.gov/safety/report-problem-fda/reporting-unlawful-sales-medical-products-internet>

Is the Louisiana Department of Health concerned about shipping channels such as the Port of New Orleans being affected by COVID-19?

Department officials met with the Coast Guard to discuss potential issues with the COVID-19 virus once it became clearer that the virus was spreading globally. We don't think there will be potential for spreading the virus through shipping channels.

MULTISYSTEM INFLAMMATORY SYNDROME IN CHILDREN

What is Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome, or MIS-C?

Multisystem Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) is a condition where different body parts can become inflamed, including the heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, skin, eyes or gastrointestinal organs. The cause of MIS-C is unknown but many children with this condition had the virus that causes COVID-19 or had been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

Are there any cases of MIS-C in Louisiana?

Yes, on May 27, the Louisiana Department of Health reported 13 cases including one death from MIS-C in Louisiana. The patients range in age from 0-19 years of age. The Department will update information on MIS-C each Monday on its coronavirus webpage.

What are the symptoms of MIS-C?

- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Neck pain
- Rash
- Bloodshot eyes
- Feeling extra tired

Not all children will have all of the same symptoms. Seek emergency care right away if your child is showing any of these emergency warning signs of MIS-C.

Where can I get more information about MIS-C?

The CDC has added information about MIS-C to its coronavirus website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children/mis-c.html>:

The CDC has a team that is working with U.S. and international scientists, healthcare providers, and other partners to learn more about this new syndrome. As CDC investigates each new MIS-C case, information is sent to healthcare providers and state and local health departments.

HURRICANES AND COVID-19

Is there any federal help/aid available?

Residents of five Louisiana parishes impacted by Hurricane Laura can begin to register for FEMA assistance today. This assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans for uninsured property loss and other programs to help people and businesses recover from Hurricane Laura.

People who sustained losses in the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron and Jefferson Davis can begin applying for assistance today by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7

a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

If I need a hotel, is there contact information or a location to go to for help?

There is only one referral for sheltering at this time; the Alexandria Mega Shelter at 8125 Hwy 71 South in Alexandria.

People can text the keyword LASHELTER to 898-211 for information on where to go for sheltering, or go this website: www.LA211Shelterinfo.org

I am a cancer patient and had to evacuate. How can I continue to get my treatments (such as chemo or radiation)?

The Louisiana Department of Health and Louisiana Cancer Prevention have a toll-free line to help displaced patients find cancer care. **The toll-free line is 888-599-1073** and is staffed during regular business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday. The phone line is designed to help connect patients with cancer to their doctors. There is also a medical advisor who can help answer questions from patients.

Where can I find the most up-to-date information about my Medicaid coverage?

From accessing Medicaid services from out-of-state, to financial assistance, to pharmacy services, Medicaid recipients can find the answers at one spot, www.lhdh.la.gov/laura. After going to this page, next click on *Hurricane Laura Member Assistance FAQs*.

My pharmacy is closed. What should I do to get my prescription?

Same answer as above.

Is there any assistance available to access over the counter medicines?

There may be assistance through your managed care plan. Please call your health plan to see what they may offer.

Health Plan	Contact
Aetna	Member Services: 1-855-242-0802
AmeriHealth Caritas	Perform Rx Member Services: 1-866-452-1040
Healthy Blue	Member Pharmacy Services: 1-833-207-3114
Louisiana Healthcare Connections	Member Services: 1-866-595-8133
United Healthcare	Member Services: 1-866-675-1607

If the Medicaid member does not belong to a health plan (they are a fee-for-service member), Medicaid only covers antihistamine and antihistamine/decongestants over the counter medications. All other over

the counter medications are not payable.

Are masks still useful when they cannot be washed (for a week now, possibly longer)?

Any mask is better than no mask. Try to use the disposable masks. Wear a cloth mask for a few days, and then switch to another.

It is very difficult to wear a mask in very hot places, especially with so many people working outdoors in direct sunlight with little access to cooled spaces due to widespread power outages. Any tips?

Obviously stay hydrated. Try to setup in shade if possible. Take frequent breaks. When necessary, step away from other people and remove the mask for a break. Put the mask back on before congregating. Get help lifting heavy or bulky objects.

We are under a boil water advisory, so water is scarce. How can someone practice good handwashing while under a boil water advisory?

We realize it is much tougher now but whenever and wherever possible, it is still critical to wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, followed by hand sanitizer. It's also important to be extra careful while preparing food if you have trouble accessing water or clean water.

Where can I get information about safe drinking water?

The Louisiana Department of Health updates the status of public drinking water systems twice a day. Information can be found at this site: www.ldh.la.gov/safedrinkingwater

What is a Boil Water Advisory?

A boil water notice is issued by the health department of a water company as a precaution to protect people from drinking water that may have been contaminated. Boil water advisories (BWA) are issued when an unexpected condition has caused a potential for biological contamination of water in a public water system. Common reasons for a BWA include loss of pressure in the distribution system, loss of disinfection, and other unexpected water quality problems. Boil advisories result after water line breaks, treatment disruptions, power outages and floods.

How long do I have to boil water if under a boil advisory?

BWAs typically last for 24 to 48 hours, but this can be longer and the need to boil water may last for several days or more. How long depends on the conditions that caused the need to boil, how quickly the conditions can be corrected, and how long it takes for laboratory results to confirm that your water is again ready to drink.

How do I boil my water so that it is safe to drink?

Bring water to a full rolling boil for 1 minute, then allow the water to cool before using. Because water may take 30 minutes to cool, plan ahead. Make up a batch of boiled water in advance so you will not be tempted to use it hot and risk scalds or burns. Boiled water may be used for drinking, cooking, and washing.

Can I still use water for food prep, drinking, brushing teeth, baby formula?

No, any water used for food preparation or cooking needs to be from an acceptable alternate source or boiled first.

What about showering in water while there is a BWA in place?

Unless a "Do Not Use" notification has been issued, your water may be used by healthy individuals for showering, bathing, shaving, and washing as long as care is taken not to swallow water and avoid shaving nicks.

Can I use ice that is being produced by water under a boil advisory?

No.

How can I protect myself from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning?

CO is found in fumes produced by portable generators. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms that include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.

To prevent CO poisoning, purchase and install a CO detector. Change the batteries every six months. Never run a generator, or other any gasoline-powered engine less than 20 feet from an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area; inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.

How do I know if I need a tetanus vaccine?

Tetanus booster shots are recommended every 10 years. If you experience a puncture wound, it's best to get the booster shot regardless of when you had your last tetanus shot.

My friend or family member evacuated and I have not heard from them. Is there anything I should do?

The State has established a service, called Connect, as a way for families to locate loved ones who evacuated from Hurricane Laura to state-provided hotel rooms. The number to call is 225-342-2727. People can also fill out a form online to reach out to loved ones who may be in state non-congregate shelters. That form is found at <http://www.dcf.louisiana.gov/form/dcf-connect>

People who have evacuated and would like to let their family members and friends know they are safe can register at <https://safeandwell.communityos.org/>, a website set up by the American Red Cross.

If a Medicaid patient evacuates and needs a prescription filled, how can that be done?

In this situation, the request for an early refill can be made at a commercial pharmacy. When getting such a request, the patient needs to have their Medicaid information and provide to the pharmacy. The pharmacists will contact the respective Medicaid plan and request an early refill.

If a Medicaid recipient gets displaced out-of-state and seeks refill at an out-of-state pharmacy, the request will be directed to the State Medicaid program.

For patients whose active prescription has lapsed, pharmacists have the authority to issue a 30- day emergency refill authorization.

PROVIDERS

Why is my pharmacy not listed as a site that provides Covid vaccines? We provide most other vaccines as well.

The list of vaccination sites only includes those sites which are receiving new first doses as of Monday morning in a given week, it is not an exhaustive list of every site who has received COVID vaccine since January. This is so sites don't receive hundreds of phone calls for doses they don't have / appointments they cannot make. Most sites have waitlists in the hundreds, so we hope this minimizes some of the burden on their phone lines and staff, while also reducing the number of facilities a person would have to call to find an available time slot.

If a site for some reason has some leftover doses and would like to be added back to the list, we are happy to do so. According to our records, your site received vaccines on February 22. If you would like to replenish them please fill out the request form (on this page: <https://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/3880>). If you're selected to receive doses, we will notify you of what quantities you could expect and you would appear on the list during the week in which they receive your shipment.

What if I don't know if I will be hosting a Community Vaccination Event (CVE) when I request vaccines?

When a provider makes a request on Friday, page two on the form asks if the provider plans to use any of their allocations for Community Vaccination Events (CVE). If the provider checks yes, they will be required to answer a series of questions. If they do not know if they will be doing a CVE at the time of the request, there will be a form that can be used after the allocation request has been submitted. The provider is required to provide the details when they know them.