

## **What to do if you think you were exposed to someone with coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

### **March 17, 2020**

If you think you have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, follow the steps below to monitor your health, and avoid spreading the disease to others if you get sick. All people who get sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath (even if your symptoms are very mild), *should stay at home and away from other people for 72 hours after fever is gone and other symptoms have improved.* Specific guidance for close contacts of COVID-19 cases can be found below.

### **What is coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?**

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2. The most common symptoms of the disease are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Most people with COVID-19 will have mild disease but some people will get sicker and may need to be hospitalized.

### **How do I know if I was exposed?**

You generally need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. Close contact includes:

- Living in the same household as a sick person with COVID-19;
- Caring for a sick person with COVID-19;
- Being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 10 minutes; OR,
- Being in direct contact with secretions from a sick person with COVID-19 (e.g., being coughed on, kissing, sharing utensils, etc.).

If you are not aware that you had close contact with a sick person with COVID-19, you are at lower risk for infection. However, the COVID-19 virus is circulating in Georgia and you should take steps to protect yourself. Wash hands often with soap and water, use hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Disinfect frequently touched surfaces in your home daily. Maintain distance from others especially those who are sick.

### **What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 but am not sick?**

You should monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19. *You should not go to work or school and should avoid public places for 14 days.*

### **What should I do if I am a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and get sick?**

If you get sick with fever, cough or shortness of breath (even if your symptoms are very mild), *you should stay at home and away from other people for 7 days from illness onset or for 72 hours after fever is gone and other symptoms have improved, whichever is longer.*

- Consider notifying your close contacts of your illness so they can also monitor themselves for illness.
- If you are age 60 years or over, pregnant, or have medical conditions, you may be at increased risk of serious infection and should notify your physician's office that you were exposed to COVID-19. Call ahead to discuss, do not just go to the office. They may want to monitor your health more closely or test you for COVID-19. Your healthcare provider is a good source of medical advice.
- If you do not have a high-risk condition but want medical advice, you can call your healthcare provider and tell them that you were exposed to someone with COVID-19. Your healthcare provider can help you decide if you need to be evaluated in person.

There are currently no medications to treat COVID-19. If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you may have been exposed to COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive or immediately after they arrive.

**CDC guidance:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/caring-for-yourself-at-home.html>  
**Contact information for the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH): 1-866-PUB-HLTH (782-4584)**