

UPDATED 3/12/2020: Interim Guidance on How to Care for Someone with Symptoms Consistent COVID-19

The following information is a general guide and is not intended to take the place of medical advice from a healthcare provider.

If you are in King County and have symptoms of COVID-19, questions about COVID-19 or if you're a healthcare provider with questions about COVID-19, contact our novel coronavirus call center: 206-477-3977.

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- **Cough**
 - Ask the person to wear a face mask whenever they are around others.
 - Ask if the person's cough is a new symptom, their usual cough has changed in some way, or has become worse.
 - There are many reasons other than COVID-19 that someone might have a cough including COPD, allergies, pneumonia, influenza, or the common cold.
- **Fever**
 - Fever is a sign that the body is fighting the infection. It will go away as the patient gets better.
 - People with fever can become dehydrated from sweating or from drinking/eating less when not feeling well.
- **Difficulty Breathing or Shortness of Breath- Call 911**
 - If you identify a client with severe symptoms of COVID-19, Call 911.
 - **Severe symptoms include:**
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
 - Sudden dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Severe or persistent vomiting
 - Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- **Call 911 if someone:**
 - Has difficulty breathing, fast breathing, or skin is paler than normal, or bluish in lighter skinned people and gray or whitish in darker skinned people
 - Begins coughing up blood
 - Shows signs of dehydration and cannot take enough fluids
 - Does not respond or communicate appropriately or appears confused
 - Complains of pain or pressure in the chest
 - Has convulsions (seizures)

- Is getting worse again after appearing to improve
- Is an infant younger than 2 months old with fever, poor feeding, urinating less than 3 times per day or other signs of illness

MONITORING & COMFORTING & PREVENTING THE SPREAD TO OTHERS

- Keep the ill person as comfortable as possible, in an area separate from other guests/clients. Rest is important.
- Ask the person to wear a face mask whenever they are around others.
- Keep tissues and a trash bag for their disposal within reach of the patient.
- Encourage respiratory best practices (wear mask, cover cough) and frequent hand washing.
- Encourage people to drink liquids (water, broth, herbal tea, diluted sports drinks or Pedialyte)
- Watch for signs of dehydration:
 - Decreased saliva/dry mouth and tongue
 - Skin tenting: check this by picking up layers of skin between your thumb and forefinger and gently pinching for 1 second. Normally, the skin will flatten out into its usual shape right away. If patient is dehydrated, the skin will “tent” or take 2 or more seconds to flatten out. This is best checked on the belly skin of a child and on the upper chest of an adult.
 - Decreased output of urine, which becomes dark in color from concentration.
 - Weakness or unresponsiveness
 - If someone becomes unresponsive, call 911
- Offer small amounts of fluids frequently to prevent dehydration, even if they do not feel thirsty.
- If the ill person is not eating solid foods, include fluids that contain sugars and salts, such as broth or soups, sports drinks, like Gatorade® (diluted half and half with water), Pedialyte® or Lytren® (undiluted), ginger ale and other sodas, but not diet drinks.
- Watch for complications and severe symptoms.
 - Complications are more common in individuals with health conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung problems, or people with weakened immune systems.
- Drinking alcohol can increase the risk of dehydration
 - Decreasing the amount of alcohol or a lower alcohol content can help
 - Increase the amount of hydrating fluids if a person is also drinking alcohol

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- It is unsafe for a person who consumes a heavy amount of alcohol to suddenly stop drinking “cold turkey”
- Smoking substances like tobacco, marijuana, meth or cocaine can also make respiratory symptoms worse or may have contributed to underlying lung disease possibly making the person at higher risk of severe disease or complications.
 - Increased symptom monitoring is recommended.