

COVID-19 TALKING POINTS

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?

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

What are the symptoms?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases. The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure**.*

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Does the disease spread easily?

Yes. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”) in some affected geographic areas. Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

How severe is this?

This is a rapidly evolving situation and information will be updated as it becomes available from ongoing investigations. The complete clinical picture is not fully known. Reported illnesses have ranged from very mild to severe, including illness (pneumonia in both lungs and multi-organ failure) resulting in death. Older people and people of all ages with severe underlying health conditions, like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example -- seem to be at higher risk of developing serious COVID-19 illness.

How can I help protect myself?

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

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

What if I get sick?

- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Before going to the ER, call 211 or your personal physician and discuss your symptoms and determine the proper course of treatment.
- If you have severe or life-threatening symptoms, call 911

What is the big deal about this disease?

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a novel (new) disease. Typically, flu kills an average of 50,000 Americans each year with a death rate of .1%. Right now, COVID 19 is nearing that number of deaths. However, one of the concerns with COVID 19 is that preliminary numbers indicate that the death rate could be as high as 3 to 5%. If that holds true, that is a significantly worse number than the flu. Not only in actual deaths, but in associated healthcare needs (like people in the hospital). Our healthcare system could be overwhelmed.

Why is the government declaring States of Emergencies?

There is a huge benefit in slowing the spread of the virus so that everybody does not get sick at the same time. If left unchecked, 40 to 50 percent of the population could become sick for an extended duration (14 days or more) all within the same short time-period. States of Emergencies allow top government officials additional resources and executive authorities during emergencies, such as authorities to implement emergency protective measures to protect the public.

What's the difference between Isolation and Quarantines?

Isolation occurs when a person is known or believed to be infected with a disease and potentially infectious. It's the process of separating known sick people from those who are known to be not sick. An isolated person is usually told to stay in a separate room from other people in their homes and use a separate bathroom.

Quarantine occurs when a person may have been exposed to a disease but is not yet symptomatic. It restricts their movement to see if they become sick. This will be in effect for 14 days.

What's happening at (INSERT NAME OF BUSINESS)?

This question SHOULD not be addressed by elected or government officials.

Based on guidance from the Iowa Department of Public Health and a State of Iowa Assistant Attorney General, the Jasper County Health Department CANNOT identify workplaces and businesses, even if the workplace or business self-identify positive cases at their place of employment. This policy may change, but for now, it is the law.

If an elected official wishes to provide resources to a concerned citizen they can refer them to the following:

- The state of Iowa has released an updated dashboard on coronavirus.iowa.gov that will be updated daily to include comprehensive tracking of COVID-19 in Iowa. The new dashboard includes cases, deaths, and tests conducted in each county. The state is now providing demographic information that was not previously provided as well as Iowa's epidemiological curve.
- A public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. **The line is available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1 or 1-800-244-7431.**
- Individuals with questions of a legal nature, whether personal or related to a business, should call the COVID-19 Legal Information Hotline at **1-800-332-0419**. It was developed in partnership with Iowa Legal Aid, the Iowa State Bar Association and the Polk County Volunteer Lawyer Project. The hotline can assist Iowans with business and compliance issues, eviction, denial of unemployment benefits, employment issues and other personal legal concerns. Callers will be asked to leave a message and someone will return your call.
- Another resource that all residents of Iowa have access to is the Iowa WorkForce Development's Office Division of Labor which handles Iowa OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration). Their website link is <https://www.iowaosha.gov/iowa-osha>.

What is the City doing?

- The City is complying with advice and directives from state and local health officers.
- The City is ensuring employees are aware of precautionary measures to be taken to avoid illness.
- The City will continue to prepare for possible additional measures that may need to be taken to

ensure services continue while keeping the safety of residents at the forefront.

- The City, nor the Jasper County government or Jasper County Health Department, does not have an enforcement authority beyond what has already occurred with the closure of city owned buildings and facilities, limiting activities on public property, etc.

What is the EOC doing?

- The Jasper County Emergency Management Agency is actively engaging Jasper County stakeholders to participate in an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) that actively plan for a wide range of possible outcomes.
- The EOC assists in providing distribution of limited, critical resources to the service providers with the highest need.
- The EOC coordinates local stakeholders to prepare short term and long term plans to respond to and mitigate the ongoing crisis. In Jasper County, the Jasper County Health Department spearheading the response during this health pandemic but is working at the EOC with other partners, including EMA, law enforcement, county and city governments. All agencies are assisting as needed to respond to the pandemic.
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