

Frequently Asked Questions

March 6, 2020

Q: What is coronavirus?

A: Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can infect the respiratory tract. The novel coronavirus, discovered in China in December 2019, causes the disease we now call “COVID-19.” Health experts are concerned because little is known about this new virus. It has the potential to cause severe illness and pneumonia in some people, and there is not a specific treatment yet. More information about the virus can be found on the [Oregon Health Authority’s website](#) or the [CDC’s website](#).

Q: How is it spread?

A: COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person contact primarily through coughs and sneezes (droplet particles), , and touching surfaces already infected (doorknobs, toys, dishes, etc.). It can spread quickly, just like a cold or flu.

Q: What is the situation in Oregon?

A: There are cases in Oregon with no known exposure, so it has spread in the community. You can find up to date information about cases in Oregon at OHA’s [website](#).

Q: What are the symptoms?

A: People who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 have reported symptoms that may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure to the virus: fever, cough, difficulty breathing.

Some people with COVID-19 develop pneumonia, and some have died. People at highest risk of complications have underlying health conditions (e.g., immune compromised, heart or lung disease, diabetes) or are elderly.

Q: How can individuals reduce the risk of COVID-19?

Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent COVID-19:

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- If you are sick, stay home and avoid close contact with others.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces.

Q: What should I do if I think a child, their family, my staff or I have been exposed to this virus?

Tell that person to watch for fever, cough or trouble breathing. If these symptoms develop, that person should stay away from others, and not go to work or school until 24 hours after symptoms resolve. COVID-19, like influenza, often causes mild illness. Not everyone who gets sick needs to visit a healthcare provider. People who become ill can call their healthcare provider to decide together if symptoms are severe enough that a medical visit is needed. It's very important that you call ahead before going to a clinic. That way the ill person and the clinic can put together a plan for the ill person to be seen in a way that avoids exposing others.

Q: Will I be required to contact families if I suspect a case of COVID-19 in my child care?

A: In Oregon's public health system, local public health authorities are the front line responders in an outbreak. The local health department would advise and help lead on contact notification and contact tracing.

You can identify your local health department through this [directory](#).

Q: What should I do as a provider about keeping sick kids – no matter what their symptoms are – out of care? Or, can I send them home when they become sick?

A: Existing Office of Child Care rules address when to keep children out of care. These rules are in the [COVID-19 section](#) of the ELD's website, organized by facility type for reference. You can download the information to post or share with families.

Q: Is COVID-19 (coronavirus) a child care restrictable disease, meaning the child cannot be in care?

A: Yes.

Q: Is hand sanitizer allowed around children in a child care setting?

A: Recognizing family and provider concerns around COVID-19, the Office of Child Care (OCC) is making the following change:

Until further notice, and with the following conditions, the Office of Child Care will not enforce the ban on children using hand sanitizer:

- Hand sanitizer must be kept out of reach of children. It cannot be in backpacks, cubbies, etc.
- Where the rules require hand washing (e.g., after using the bathroom), children and staff must wash hands.
- Sanitizer should be administered by and its use supervised by a staff member.
- The Office of Child Care suggests providers ask for parent permission.

If you have questions, contact your state licensing specialist.

Q: How should I clean my child care facility (center or home based)?

A: It's a good idea to regularly clean surfaces that are frequently touched, such as toys, door handles, light switches and computers. The American Chemical Council has compiled [a list of products](#) – solutions, concentrates, and wipes – that have been pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during the COVID-19 outbreak. Use all cleaning products according to directions on the label.

OHA recommends cleaning frequently touch surfaces twice a day, and also after contact contamination such as someone coughing into their hand and then touching a doorknob, light switch or faucet.

Q: What else can I do as a child care provider to be prepared?

A: Review and update your emergency plans and familiarize yourself with [OHA's Toolkit for seasonal influenza](#), which contains Outbreak Detection and Management guidelines for schools and child care facilities. Be prepared for the possibility of a two week quarantine or closure.

Offer families a link or handout to [OHA's fact sheet](#) for families and schools or the [CDC's steps to proper handwashing](#).