



# North Central Health Care

Person centered. Outcome focused.

## COVID-19 Preparedness & Response

### Frequently Asked Questions for NCHC Employees

August 5, 2020 • All-Staff Virtual Open Forum Questions Submitted by Staff

**Q: If a person has a medical condition where they cannot wear a N95 mask when required, then what is going to keep that person safe?**

**A:** If the employee cannot wear a N95 mask, then that employee would not necessarily have to be in situations where an N95 mask is required. The CDC has stated that if in the event of a PPE shortage or if a N95 mask is not available, then a surgical mask can be used, but does not replace the efficacy of the N95 mask.

**Q: I am currently working on unit wearing appropriate PPE caring for Covid-19 positive residents. When out in the community going to other health care facilities, like the dentist or family physician how do respond to question "Have you been exposed to anyone under investigation for Covid-19 or positive for Covid-19?"**

**A:** Your answer would be "yes". We suggest that you call ahead and inform your personal health care providers that you work within a facility and are taking the required precautions as part of your job duties, that include the required PPE as needed to care for Covid-19 patients. If you are caring for positive Covid-19 residents at NCHC, then you would be part of regular testing taking place. You can request copies of your negative tests results from Employee Health by calling 715.848.4396 and also provide those to your healthcare provider.

**Q: Is it safe for family, friends, other employees, etc. to be in contact with MVCC staff, knowing we have positive Covid-19 residents in the facility?**

**A:** Staff that work in MVCC are taking the appropriate precautions to minimize the risk of spreading illness, including the required PPE as recommended by the CDC. Staff are being tested on a regular basis and don't require quarantine.

**Q: How many days is a Covid-19 positive person able to transmit the virus to another person? When do you begin to count the days?**

**A:** Recommendations from the CDC are as follows:

#### **I had COVID-19, and I had symptoms**

You can be with others after:

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared and
- At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and
- Symptoms have improved

Depending on your healthcare provider's advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you are tested, you can be around others when you have no fever, respiratory symptoms have improved, and you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart. (answer continued on next page)

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## **I tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms**

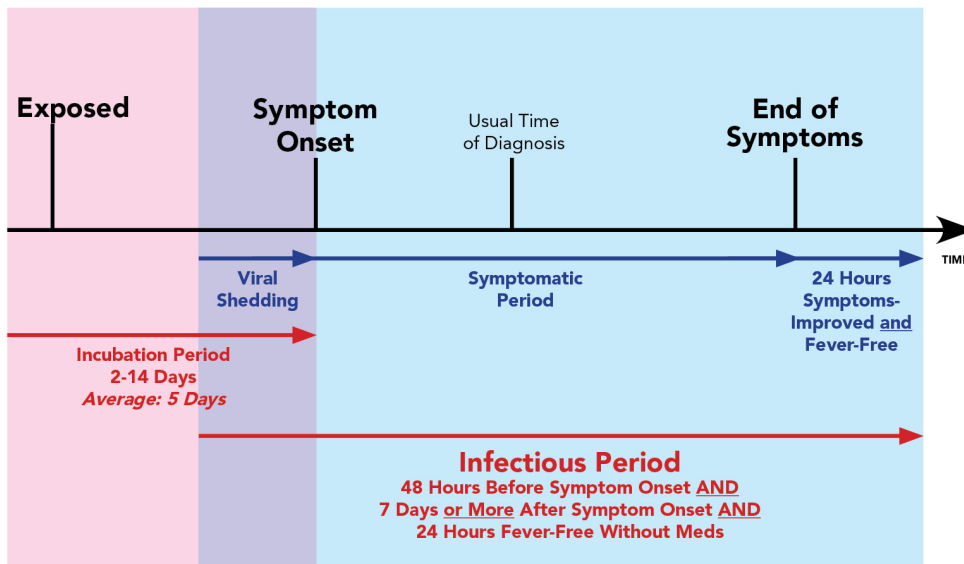
If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after:

- 10 days have passed since test

Depending on your healthcare provider’s advice and availability of testing, you might get tested to see if you still have COVID-19. If you will be tested, you can be around others after you receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart.

\*\*Remember to continue wearing a face covering in public, practice social distancing, maintaining 6 feet of distance from others and wash your hands often.

## Infectious Period Definition



**Q: The Marathon County Health Dept is providing Covid-19 testing to both symptomatic and asymptomatic people at the free testing on Friday this week. If I am asymptomatic and getting tested at this event, do I have to disclose at the screening that I am awaiting the test results? Am I considered “under investigation” by our employee screening questions?**

**A:** If you are interested in being tested at the free event, and you have no positive contacts and are asymptomatic, NCHC would consider this the same as our current facility-wide testing happening at MVCC or PC. You would not be considered under investigation for the purpose of the screening.

That said, if you seek out the test because of community contact with a Covid-19 positive person, or because you have symptoms, this should still trigger a yes answer to the screening questions. You should contact Employee Health and your manager. You should stay home.

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**Q: With a positive Covid-19 case in Pharmacy, is there a risk of transmitting Covid-19 to those who receive prescriptions from the Pharmacy or who get prescriptions delivered to them from the Pharmacy?**

**A:** The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).

Before Covid-19, as standard Pharmacy best practices, employees were already required to wear gloves when physically required to touch any medication. Typically, there is not physical contact by employees with medications, and when required, gloves are used.

All Pharmacy staff wear surgical masks at all times, practice good hand hygiene and NCHC has changed Pharmacy processes that will reduce in-person interaction with the Pharmacy staff at this time: Staff are practicing social distancing when a patient arrives to pick up a prescription at counter. Anyone who picks up prescriptions will not sign documents for prescriptions and a pharmacist will authorize and sign for the exchange. The bag with the prescription inside will be placed on counter for the patient to take, and it will not be a hand-to-hand exchange.

**Q: I was sick with symptoms consistent with Covid-19 earlier. I was tested and was negative for Covid-19, but feel the test could be wrong. How accurate are the tests and can I get Covid-19 again if that is what it was?**

**A:** If you feel you had Covid-19 before, you can get tested for Covid-19 antibodies. A serologic test has a specificity of greater than 99% and a sensitivity of 96% based on initial performance evaluations. It can be used to identify past SARS-CoV-2 infection in people who were infected at least 1 to 3 weeks previously. Talk with your healthcare provider who can administer this test. The PCR tests NCHC currently administers have a sensitivity of 96% based on initial performance evaluations. Kit tests, like a rapid-test which we do not use, have a sensitivity of 87% based on initial performance evaluations. We do not plan on using these.

Scientists are still researching and there is unfortunately not a definitive answer as to whether you can or cannot be re-infected with SARS-CoV-2.

**Q: What is our plan at NCHC if Covid-19 gets out of hand?**

**A:** NCHC was the first healthcare facility in the region to enact screening procedures with visitors and staff, limit visitation and plan for a Covid-19 positive case within our facility. The Incident Command Team meets daily to discuss current status and changes needed to our operations so that we can anticipate the needs of our organization and individual programs. In an Alert Level 4 or 5 scenario at NCHC, temporarily closing certain programs and reallocating staff can take place to maintain operations of our 24-7 programming. Also there is state and federal assistance that can be enacted to assist facilities who would be unable to operate without the aide of outside sources.

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