



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

*Updated: April 13, 2020*

### COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

#### **Should I be wearing a facemask to protect myself?**

- The Routt County Public Health Order requires you to wear a facemask in public locations such as grocery stores, pharmacies, hardware stores, etc. Employees and customers are required to wear facemasks.
- Wearing a mask is primarily intended to protect others. We know that many people may be carriers of the virus and shedding it without knowing it. Wearing the mask can help individuals who are asymptomatic from shedding the disease to others.
- In addition to the Public Health Order of wearing facemasks in a public setting, it is recommended to wear a facemask whenever you are outside and have the potential of being near people within six feet.
- Implementing current protections are still necessary, including keeping a physical distance of six feet and staying at home.
- Procuring masks for the general public should not compete with the need for N-95 masks for medical personnel, first responders, and law enforcement.
- Wearing a mask is most critical at locations where individuals will be in the same area with people outside their household, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, etc.

#### **How do I find out about positive cases and testing in Routt County?**

You can track the number of tests taken, positive results and other information on the [www.covid19routtcounty.com](http://www.covid19routtcounty.com) website. There is also a symptom survey that you can participate in to help our local Public Health Department, <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/218390363b6d49fa86280ab20085ee4c>

#### **What happens if you have symptoms?**

If you have any symptoms – even mild ones – the Department of Public Health urges you to stay home and isolate yourself until:

- You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine); AND
- Other symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved; AND
- At least seven days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

- Anyone in your household you have had close contact with (within six feet for approximately 10 minutes) should self-quarantine for 14 days, even if you haven't been tested for COVID-19.
- If you have a medical emergency, call 911. If you have severe respiratory symptoms, especially shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, tell the 911 dispatcher about your symptoms. Do not wait for a COVID-19 test to call 911.

### **What happens if I have come in direct contact with someone who has tested positive? What should I do?**

It is recommended that you self-quarantine for 14 days. If you develop symptoms call your healthcare provider. If you don't have symptoms, self-isolate but there is no need to call healthcare provider (please don't overwhelm them).

### **What should individuals be doing right now?**

Obey the State and Routt County Public Health Orders. Stay home and limit contact with others through physical distancing, stay informed from reputable resources, remain calm, and don't forget about your mental health. Check on neighbors, family and friends with a quick call and through digital options.

### **Why don't we have enough tests? Who gets tested?**

We all agree one of the challenges has been access to testing. We all want more tests available. Based on current supplies we are testing the highest at-risk patients, first responders, medical providers, law enforcement and those who are immune comprised. If you have experienced symptoms within the last seven days of fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, lack of appetite, and/or body aches, contact your health care provider to be screened for a test. Tests now take 24-36 hours to process.

- Our public health and emergency operations staff are working on identifying all possible sources for testing.
- This is a nationwide issue, not a local one, and Public Health will continue to do what they can to procure tests.
- As of April 13, Public Health was able to procure 100 tests from CDPHE. Public Health has also bought the components for testing kits to augment testing capacity.
- The larger issue with testing is that it is a snapshot in time. You could be negative today and positive tomorrow. The other issue is that there is no treatment nor is there a vaccine.
- There has been discussion of an anti-body test. CDPHE is not currently supporting this methodology because of a lack of evidence as well as false positives and false negatives associated with this testing. That may change in the future but that is the current position. Serology tests are not necessarily helpful for diagnosing active infection, but can tell if someone has been previously infected. Public Health still needs studies to confirm how long infection infers lasting immunity to another infection.

### **If I can't get tested, what should I do?**

There is currently **no** vaccine to prevent novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Below are suggested measures from the CDC that can prevent the spread of respiratory diseases:

- Practice physical distancing of six feet or more.
- Wear a facemask in public places
- Follow guidelines on travel.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick and keep your children at home when they 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe or using an EPA-approved cleaning product.
- It is important to call ahead before going to see a doctor or emergency room to prevent the spread of illness. Tell them your symptoms and that you suspect you were exposed to someone with COVID-19 or had recent travel to a country that is experiencing community spread.

### **Do we have enough hospital beds?**

Communities across the world have taken drastic measures to contain the spread of COVID-19, shutting down almost every form of public gathering, from schools to restaurants to church services. Among the primary reasons for these limitations is the fact that hospitals do not have the resources to treat the influx of patients who could become infected if such activities continue unabated. Locally, UCHealth Yampa Valley Medical Center is a 39-bed hospital. The hospital has visitor restrictions in place to keep its patients, staff and physicians as safe and healthy as possible. The public should prioritize using other health resources, such as self-quarantining or consulting their primary care physician. Those without a primary care physician can schedule a virtual urgent care appointment online. The community's health professionals have plans in place to address growth and if additional resources are required.

### **What happens if we have a surge in Routt County? Are we prepared?**

Our Routt County Emergency Operations Center is addressing this concern. UCHealth Yampa Valley Medical Center has a medical surge plan to include their Steamboat Springs facility, as well as UCHealth statewide. Additionally, the Emergency Operations Center has identified and is preparing the Ice Rink and the Community Center as locations for Tier 3 and 4 patients, those who will not need the same level of medical care as the hospital but still need monitoring and some care like oxygen and IVs.

### **Why are officials not releasing exact locations where infected people visited?**

According to Public Health guidelines and to protect privacy, names and locations are not released. Health officials determined it is unlikely that releasing those locations would help. Medical experts believe the virus cannot survive on a surface for more than three days and typically do not receive information about the places where patients may have been until after the three-day window had passed. It appears that close proximity contact is more relevant than simply knowing a location.

### **Who is working to contain this virus?**

The Routt County Emergency Operations Center is working together with state organizations such as Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE), the Governor's office and state agencies, as well as national entities like the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, all local agencies from North Routt to South Routt, West Routt and Hayden, and those throughout the city and county, both public and private, are working to help the community get through this situation.

### **Are there enough food and supplies in supermarkets?**

While stores may be out of stock on some products (like toilet paper and cleaning supplies), stores express confidence that items are being replenishment. The biggest driver of the out-of-stocks on shelves is that people are over-purchasing. It would help our entire community if people would follow the recommendation to purchase just what you need for 5-7 days, less if you can shop on a more frequent basis. In addition, many stores have adjusted hours for restocking and cleaning as well as established specific hours for vulnerable shoppers who must leave home to obtain their groceries.

### **What is happening to all the businesses that have closed?**

Our community has come together to support local outlets, and the Chamber, Colorado Work Force Center, Social Services, and Human Services are working to share resources, assisting those who need aid and relaying information about programs. While the business environment will continue to change over the next weeks and months, we must all adapt to these instabilities and most importantly, look out for each other.

### **What happens if we have an outbreak? How are we prepared?**

Our Routt County Emergency Operations Center, which brings all local emergency resources together, has been administering the local resource for the past several weeks. This includes first responders to public health and city and county departments required to help deal with the response. Our goal is making our community as safe as possible and working together to slow the spread of the virus.

### **What is the Public Health Department doing?**

Prior to any COVID-19 cases in Colorado, the Routt County Public Health Department was distributing cleaning and prevention guidance to community partners, the airport, healthcare providers in the community, businesses, schools, skilled nursing/assisted nursing facilities, and other vulnerable populations. The Public Health Department has ramped up and hired more staff to address this pandemic. Public Health is issuing quarantine and isolation orders and conducting contact tracings on COVID-19 positive cases and has been communicating health alerts to all healthcare providers with updated recommendations from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Check out the Routt County COVID-19 website: [www.covid19routtcounty.com](http://www.covid19routtcounty.com).