



homeforward

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Frequently Asked Questions
Novel Coronavirus
(COVID-19)

Date:
March 12, 2020



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COVID-19: General Questions

What is novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

According to the [Oregon Health Authority](#):

COVID-19 [also called “novel coronavirus”] is an infection caused by a new coronavirus. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause a range of symptoms. Some usually cause mild illness. Some, like this one, can also cause more severe symptoms.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

According to the [Oregon Health Authority](#):

COVID-19 infection often causes fever, cough, and some trouble breathing. Some people have mild symptoms. Other people can get quite sick. Rarely, but on occasion, people have died.

How does COVID-19 spread?

According to the [Oregon Health Authority and Recent Research](#):

COVID-19 is spread when people touch or breathe in droplets made when ill people cough, sneeze or talk. This can happen when someone is close to a sick person, within six feet. Rarely, people might catch COVID-19 by touching a surface that a person with the infection coughed or sneezed on, and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. Coronaviruses have tested as surviving between 24 and 72 hours on surfaces.

Who is at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19?

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#):

There is not currently information from published scientific reports about susceptibility of pregnant women to COVID-19. Pregnant women experience immunologic and physiologic changes which might make them more susceptible to viral respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

Early information out of China, where COVID-19 first started, shows that some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. This includes:

- Older adults
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease

If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. (An outbreak is when a large number of people suddenly get sick.) Depending on how severe the outbreak is, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people's risk of being exposed to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease.

If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease.

How can I keep myself from getting sick with COVID-19?

Summarized from the [Oregon Health Authority](#):

There are simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 as well as influenza and other illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (more than six feet) with sick people or sick animals.
- Avoid shaking hands when greeting people.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces that you frequently touch.
- Avoid non-essential travel to regions listed in [CDC travel advisories](#).

It is also important to keep your body resilient:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Exercise.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Stay up-to-date on routine vaccines. This includes the flu vaccine. It is not too late to get a flu shot to protect yourself from the flu, which continues to cause illness in Oregon.

How can my household prepare for COVID-19?

According to [Multnomah County Public Health Department](#):

There are also basic steps every household should take to prepare for any unexpected event:

- Learn about your employer's sick leave and telecommuting policies.
- Establish a childcare plan in the event your kids need to stay home from school.
- Make sure you have the kinds of foods, drinks, medications and pet supplies you would want if you needed to stay home and limit your contact with other people for a couple weeks.

- Get to know your neighbors, especially those who might need extra help like seniors or people living alone.

Is deep cleaning necessary?

According to [Multnomah County Public Health Department](#):

It's still unclear exactly how long COVID-19 can remain on a surface. Early evidence suggests that the virus can survive for several days at room temperature. This is why wiping down commonly touched surfaces helps to prevent the spread of illnesses like COVID-19 and the flu. Check out our [Cleaning and Disinfecting guide](#) for more information.

Should I use Personal Protective Equipment, like a mask, to keep myself from getting sick?

According to [Multnomah County Public Health Department](#):

A facemask should be used by people who have COVID-19 and are showing symptoms. This is to protect others from the risk of getting infected.

If you need hands-on health care and you are coughing, expect to be asked to put on a mask immediately and limit the number of people with you to no more than two adults who are well. If you are sick and coming to seek healthcare, wear a mask if you have one at home.

The use of face masks also is crucial for health workers and those who are taking care of someone infected with COVID-19 in close settings (at home or in a healthcare facility).

What should I do if I am sick?

Summarized from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#):

Call your doctor or healthcare provider for medical advice if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough, or difficulty breathing, OR If you are sick and your symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

Where can I find the latest information about COVID-19?

For Home Forward specific updates, please visit our website: <http://www.homeforward.org>

For updates about the response from trusted public health partners, please visit:

- [County Response](#): Multnomah County Public Health Department ([link](#))
- [State Response](#): Oregon Health Authority ([link](#))
- [Federal Response](#): Center for Disease Control and Prevention ([link](#))
- [Global Response](#): World Health Organization ([link](#))

COVID-19: What is Home Forward doing?

Adjusting Business Practices

Please check our website at <http://www.homeforward.org> for information about how we're doing business during the declared state of emergency.

Home Forward's Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Home Forward has a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure that we maintain essential operations during an emergency, natural disaster, or public health crisis.

Home Forward is updating our procedures in this plan related to Pandemics, like COVID-19, to keep our staff, residents, partners, and vendors safe.

As the situation evolves, we will be providing regular updates to staff, residents and participants, our partners, and vendors.

Working with partners

Home Forward is working closely with our partners at the Multnomah County Public Health Department to ensure that we are doing everything we can to keep our residents, participants, and staff safe and healthy.

Cleaning and Sanitization

Home Forward is working with staff and/or vendors on increased sanitization of commonly touched surfaces at the properties and offices that we own and operate.

Community Meetings

As of March 11, 2020, Home Forward has cancelled all community gatherings with residents and participants sponsored by Home Forward. There may be exceptions for health and safety related meetings, if necessary. This will remain in place until the Oregon State of Emergency is lifted.

Please visit Home Forward's [website](#) to check for the most recent updates about community meetings.

COVID-19: Home Forward Residents/Participants

Do I have to pay rent during the State of Emergency for COVID-19?

Yes, you must continue to pay your rent.

I am worried about not being able to pay my rent because COVID-19 has impacted my income. What should I do?

If you are worried about not being able to afford your rent because your income was impacted by being sick with COVID-19, or the impacts of the virus on your work hours, please call us.

- Voucher holders: Please contact your case manager to report a loss of income and request an interim income certification.
- Public and Affordable Housing Residents: Contact your property manager as soon as possible to talk about your options. We are suspending evictions for nonpayment of rent during the State of Emergency for COVID-19, but it's important that you work with us to verify your situation and make arrangements based on your household's circumstances.

How do I pay rent during the State of Emergency for COVID-19?

Continue to pay rent as you normally would. If you normally drop off your rent in person and your property manager's Office is closed, please mail it or use the rent drop box, if available.

If you still have questions about how to pay your rent, please call your property manager.

What if I need to come to Home Forward for an issue related to my housing?

In an abundance of caution to keep our residents, participants, and staff safe and healthy, all meetings at Home Forward will be by appointment only starting Monday, March 16, 2020.

Please call the person you would like to meet with to schedule an appointment. Home Forward staff may work with you to have a meeting over the phone, or on a video conferencing application instead of in person.

If you don't know who you need to meet with, please call or email us and we will connect you to the right person:

- Email: Info@homeforward.org
- General Inquiries: (503) 802-8300
- After hours emergency: (503) 239-2773

What if I have time sensitive paperwork that I need to drop off in person?

Please call whomever you usually drop paperwork off with for guidance before coming in person.

During Oregon's State of Emergency related to COVID-19, we are trying to be as flexible as possible with paperwork deadlines and want to problem solve with you.

What if I'm sick and have a repair scheduled?

Please call your Property Manager. They may ask you if you have a coughing sickness and what type of repair you need.

Some non-urgent repairs may need to wait until you are feeling better.

If a repair can't wait, an employee or contractor may wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) while completing the repair, like protective glasses, gloves, and/or a body suit. This does not mean that the employee is sick, but that they are taking precautions to keep you, them, and the community healthy.

My neighbor is sick. What can I do to protect myself?

If your neighbor is sick it does not necessarily mean that they are sick with COVID-19. However, you can take steps to protect yourself from getting sick from COVID-19. Please see the guidance under question: "How can I keep myself from getting sick with COVID-19?" [above](#).

What will happen if someone in my building tests positive for COVID-19?

If someone in your building tests positive for COVID-19, we will work with the County Public Health Department to keep everyone safe and healthy. A response may include recommending isolation.

COVID-19: Home Forward Staff/Contractors

What should employers do if an employee has a positive case of the COVID-19 virus?

As part of the routine investigation of diseases like COVID 19, Public Health would contact employers about potential exposures and assess risk in the facility. If Home Forward is concerned about a potential exposure in the workplace, we'll work with public health officials to take appropriate precautions without violating any individual's privacy or protected health information.

Do Home Forward staff/contractors need to continue meeting with residents/participants in person?

In an abundance of caution to keep our residents, participants, and staff safe and healthy, all meetings at Home Forward will be by appointment only starting Monday, March 16, 2020.

We are asking residents/participants to call if they would like to schedule an appointment. Home Forward staff are encouraged to limit face-to-face meetings and conduct meetings over the phone, or on a video conferencing application.

What should I do if I must have face-to-face visits or appointments?

If meeting in person is necessary, staff should contact the Home Forward Safety Department about proper protocols to maintain health and safety.

According to [Multnomah County Public Health Department](#):

If You Work in Social Services and Have Face-to-Face Visits With Clients

- Postpone non-essential visits with any client that has a cough or fever until they are well.
- Brief interactions, like checking someone in for an appointment pose a very low risk of disease spread.
- If your in-person visit is essential and the client is well, and wash hands regularly.

If your in-person interaction is essential and the client is coughing:

- The client should wear a mask and you should maintain a distance of six feet
- Limit your time together in an enclosed space
- Consider interacting outdoors, if appropriate
- If your in-person interaction is essential and you must be within six feet (such as law enforcement), check with your manager or safety officer for guidance.

Can I ask someone I think is sick to go home?

If you are concerned about your co-worker's or supervisor's health, please talk to your supervisor or Human Resources.

If you are a supervisor and can see that a team member is visibly ill, please consult with Human Resources before asking them to go home.

If my coworker is sick, do I need to come to work?

Home Forward is encouraging all staff and contractors who are sick to stay home, and may send an employee home if they come to work sick.

If you are concerned about getting sick, please contact your supervisor or Human Resources about your options.

Where do I get Personal Protective Equipment?

Contact your supervisor or safety manager.

If I am unable to work during a shutdown, will I still be paid?

Yes, you will still be paid for your regularly scheduled wages. You may be asked to telework during the closure of our offices to maintain minimum operations. If you are deemed an essential employee and are required to report to the office, you may be paid at a higher rate depending on your labor contract.

If I am sent home because of symptoms, do I have to use my own sick/vacation/comp time?

If you are sent home because you are visibly ill, you will need to use sick leave. Home Forward is providing employees up to ten days of paid administrative leave if an employee exhausts their sick leave bank. Contact Human Resources to request paid administrative leave. We are not asking employees to provide a doctor's release to return to work from illness during this State of Emergency, as we do not want to overwhelm the health care system. We do ask that the employee have no cough or fever for 48 hours before returning to work.