

## DAILY LIFE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

*Provided to help residents reduce the spread of COVID-19, be prepared in case of an infection and know what to do if someone in their household is exposed to COVID-19.*

### **DEFINITIONS:**

#### **What is the DHHS?**

New Hampshire's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

#### **What is the CDC?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is the nation's health protection agency.

#### **What is a "mask" according to the Portsmouth Mask Ordinance?**

The Portsmouth Mask Ordinance requires a snugly-fitting face covering made of tightly woven soft material with full coverage of the nose and mouth, without vents or opening in the mask material. Plastic face shields have not been shown to provide adequate protection.

#### **What is a quarantine? How long does it last?**

Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed or may have been exposed to a contagious disease while waiting to see if they become sick.

In the case of COVID-19, the New Hampshire DHHS recommends that individuals self-quarantine for 14 days after the day they were potentially exposed. NH DHHS provides more detailed guidelines on home isolation and quarantine here: <https://www.nh.gov/covid19/resources-guidance/documents/monitor-health-table.pdf>

**It is very important that you stay home during your quarantine.** You will need to:

- Separate yourself from others in your home
- Wear a mask
- Check your temperature regularly
- Call your healthcare provider if you develop a fever or any other symptoms of an infection
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Keep household items and "touch surfaces" clean, and disinfect them often.

#### **What is isolation and how is it different from quarantine? How long does it last?**

Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. **It is very important that you stay home during your isolation, and follow the rules for quarantine, above.** The NH DHHS provides guidance as follows:

- For those isolating due to COVID-19 infection, isolation should last at least 10 days after symptoms first appear and continue through a full day (24 hours) after symptoms have disappeared.
- For a person who tests positive for COVID-19 but does not feel sick, isolation lasts until at least 10 days have passed since the date of the first positive test.

NH DHHS provides more detailed guidelines on home isolation and quarantine here:  
<https://www.nh.gov/covid19/resources-guidance/documents/monitor-health-table.pdf>

**What is a “bubble” (pandemic bubble or “pod,” social bubble, COVID-19 bubble, “quaranteam”)?**

These terms describe a small group of people who form their own social circle to quarantine together in an effort to provide social support and interaction without the greater risk of infection that results from unlimited social engagement.

**What is contract tracing?**

Contact tracing is the process of identifying persons have come into contact with an infected person and the collection of further information about these contacts. In NH, every positive COVID-19 test results in a contact tracing effort by NH DHHS to identify those who are at risk due to close proximity to the positive individual and to trace their contacts during the possible infectious timeframe. If you are at risk, you will be contacted. **If you are contacted, it is very important that you reply to NH DHHS so they can keep track of the spread of COVID-19 within different communities and try to reduce the risk.**

**BASIC SAFETY**

**No one in my household has been exposed to COVID-19. What steps can we take now to help keep our household safe?**

**AVOID “the 3 C’s”:**



**FOLLOW “the 3 W’s”:**

- **Wear** a mask.
- **Watch** your distance (maintain at least 6’ of physical distance).
- **Wash** your hands (for a minimum of 20 seconds).

The lowest risk is associated with outdoor activities. Good ventilation indoors also lessens the risk of airborne transmission. For more information, see the Ventilation FAQs:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/ventilation-faqs>

To reduce the impact on healthcare services and resources and to help protect your health, **get a flu shot.**



### **When should I wear a mask?**

The City of Portsmouth requires that masks must be worn in public places when around people who are not members of your household and you cannot maintain at least 6' of physical distance. Other locations may have other rules, but this is good guidance wherever you may be. In private buildings, once someone has left the public space (e.g. reception area), mask wearing is subject to the policy of the property owner EXCEPT in the case of food service buildings where State guidelines require mask wearing by employees at all times.

- For Mask Ordinance FAQs: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-10/MaskOrdinanceFAQ%202020.10.05.pdf>
- For FAQs on the effectiveness of masks: <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/sites/default/files/2020-09/CRTF%20Letterhead%20COVIDMasks%20FAQs%202020.07.28.pdf>



### **How and when should I wash my hands?**

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. This is especially important after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

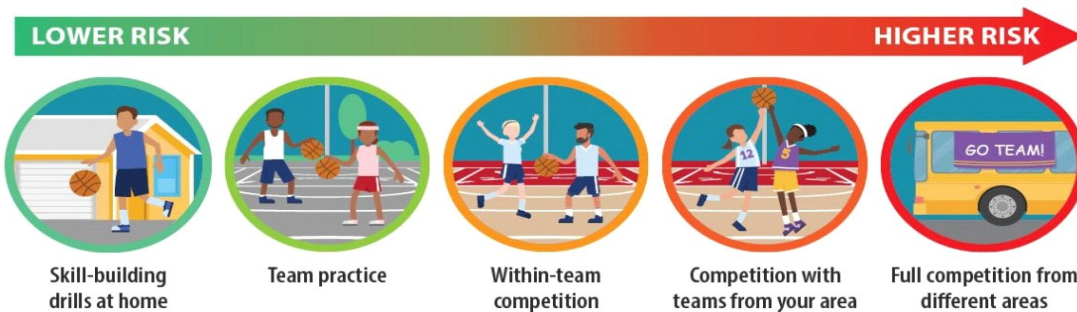
### **What, if any, items should be disinfected before coming into my home?**

While contact with a surface may expose you to the virus this is a less likely way of getting the virus based on recent scientific reports. It is not necessary to wipe down groceries or packages, rather wash your hands after shopping or bringing any item in to the home. Handwashing is key to preventing infection after touching surfaces.

### **What are the regulations and recommendations for travel to or from NH?**

- Travel to and from any of the other New England states (Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut) is allowed for NH residents without quarantine.
- NH residents returning from states outside of New England must quarantine at home for 14 days after they return.
- Travel into NH from residents of other states requires that the traveler quarantine for 14 days *before* their arrival in NH or quarantine after their arrival in NH.

- NH residents returning home after traveling to a state outside NH for more than 24 hours must also quarantine for 14 days upon returning home.
- The NH Public Health Services guidance on returning to NH from outside New England is detailed here: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>



**What about a travel sports team or participation in an activity such as dance, music, art, martial arts, etc. Where can I find the guidelines to be followed? Should I disinfect sports gear after each team event whether or not his/her equipment was shared with other players or coaches?**

Travel restrictions apply when attending any activity outside of New England for an overnight visit [see above]. Families should make travel decisions based on the needs of the family and an understanding of the quarantine requirements. This is especially important as children attending in-person school would be required to learn remotely during the quarantine period.

Sharing of sports or other activity related equipment is discouraged and if this occurs the equipment must be disinfected between users as well as at the end of the activity. Even if the equipment has not been used by others disinfecting at the end of the activity is highly recommended.

Be sure your child understands the need to use only his/her own equipment and knows who to ask for help with disinfection should another person use the equipment.

You are strongly encouraged to look at more detailed answers to these questions in the Governor’s Reopening Guidelines, here: <https://www.covidguidance.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt381/files/inline-documents/2020-05/guidance-amateur-youth-sports.pdf>

- Follow the recommendations about keeping activities outdoors whenever possible, maintaining physical distance, wearing masks, frequent handwashing and disinfection.
- Make sure all participants, volunteers and staff are aware of and adhere to the appropriate precautions during the pandemic.
- Individuals should be checked regularly for symptoms and possible exposure to the virus. They should be required to protect themselves and avoid risky behavior in their daily lives so they do not spread the virus to other members of the group.
- Shared equipment provided by program staff or volunteers must be cleaned and disinfected after every use and at the completion of each practice, training session or event.
- Recent exposure to COVID-19 at indoor hockey rinks has prompted the Governor to issue these requirements: <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-and-media/new-hockey-guidance-released-goal-flexible-testing-protocols-new-safety-provisions>

## **BEING PREPARED**

**No one in my household has been exposed to COVID-19. What should we do now to be ready if that changes?**

- Follow the safety steps recommended above
- Keep adequate food and medications on hand
- Have a plan in case of a sudden need to quarantine or go to the hospital. Think about transportation, childcare, pet care, how to keep groceries and other necessities stocked, etc.

**I live alone. What else should I be thinking about?**

In addition to the steps for every household listed above, it may be in some ways more difficult for a person living alone to stay indoors and away from other people during the pandemic. The City website provides this list of resources for those in need of support:

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/covid-19-resources>

**My workplace has closed temporarily for COVID-19 quarantine and cleaning. But now I'm out of work and am having a hard time paying my bills. Where can I get help?**

Start with your city's welfare office. They are connected to a network of resources that can help you pay electric bills, meet rent or mortgage payments, find food banks and other resources. In Portsmouth, for confidential assistance, call 603-610-7267 or email WFDept@CityofPortsmouth.com

## **COVID-19 SYMPTOMS AND TESTING**

**What are common symptoms of COVID-19?**

Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. People with the symptoms below may have COVID-19. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. The most common symptoms include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**How can I tell the difference between COVID-19 and the flu?**

**Flu** is a respiratory disease that usually comes on suddenly and often has a higher fever with overall body aches. Flu generally lasts for 5-7 days and most people recover completely.

**Covid-19** symptoms can be mild or severe and often include fever, difficult breathing, and cough. Many people have no symptoms; if a person has symptoms they usually appear 2 – 14 days after exposure.

As the symptoms are similar it's important to see your health care provider and get a test to determine if your symptoms are the flu or Covid-19.

This CDC website explains how flu and COVID-19 symptoms compare:

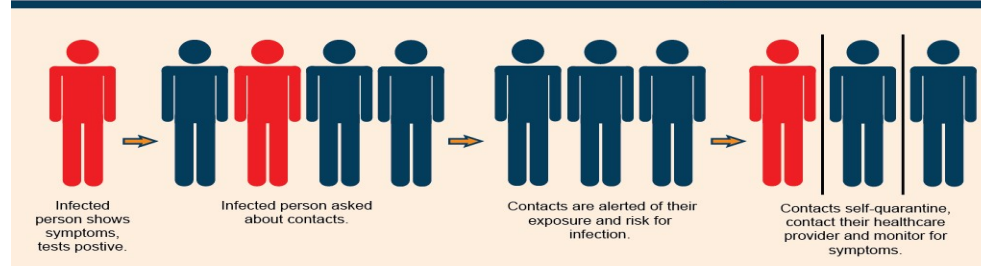
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>

### Who should be tested for COVID-19? What are the different kinds of tests for COVID-19?

For more information on testing visit the City website page on Testing FAQs.

<https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/city/testing-faqs>

## How Contact Tracing Works



### What should I do if I learn that I may have been exposed to the virus (for example, at a restaurant)?

NH Public Health does the contact tracing and will contact you if you were exposed to someone who has tested positive and may have transmitted COVID-19. See information above for more about contact tracing.

You can get a COVID-19 test on your own at any time. The following locations in Portsmouth offer testing. Most testing sites require preregistration or an appointment made by phone or online as listed below. All of these testing locations offer Molecular (PCR) testing and Convenient MD also offers antigen testing for those who have had symptoms for 1-5 days. A referral from your health care provider is required for antigen testing.

- **Rite Aid Pharmacy** (*free testing*) Schedule an appointment online: <https://www.riteaid.com/pharmacy/services/COVID-19-testing> This site uses the drug store's drive-thru window where you receive instructions from the pharmacist on taking your own sample from your nose using a swab. Test results take 2-7 days and you will receive a phone call if your test is positive.
- **Convenient MD** Call: (833) 263-0131 Pre-registration is not required at this time for any COVID-19 test at Convenient MD, including the Antigen test. You can reserve an appointment time online (<https://convenientmd.com/virtual-visit/>) or call the number above, but anyone can go directly to ConvenientMD without an appointment. You will be greeted at the entrance by a ConvenientMD staff member, who will instruct you to go to your car and wait for a ConvenientMD provider for an evaluation and the test. **PCR test:** Either a nasal swab and throat swab are collected by a medical person once you arrive at Convenient MD. The swab is then sent to the lab and results come back in 3-7 days. You will receive a phone call if your test is positive for the virus. **Antigen test:** Also known as a rapid test, you will need a referral from your health care provider to get the antigen test. This test is only available to *those that have been experiencing symptoms for 5 days or less*. Results are given in person; the wait time is 15 minutes.

- **Clear Choice MD** Call: (603) 667-9705 Online: <https://ccmdcenters.com/virtual-visits> When you arrive for your appointment, a medical aide will take a nasal swab. This site also offers antibody testing.
- **Portsmouth Regional Hospital Appledore Medical Group** Call: (603) 294-1231 Online: <https://appledoremicalgroup.com/covid-19/latest-updates/COVID-19-testing.dot> When you arrive for your appointment, a medical aide will take a deep nasal swab Note: Portsmouth Regional Hospital providing tests for hospital patients and staff only. No public testing offered.

**The basic information provided here is just a start. For more information and the most current guidance, visit:**

- State website at [www.NH.gov/COVID-19](http://www.NH.gov/COVID-19)
- State Hotline: dial 2-1-1
- The Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.htm>
- The City of Portsmouth's Health Department [special page dedicated to the latest information about COVID-19](https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/health/coronavirus-response) at <https://www.cityofportsmouth.com/health/coronavirus-response>

*Provided by Portsmouth's Citizen Response Task Force on November 4, 2020. To contact the Citizen Response Task Force, please email [hotline@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:hotline@cityofportsmouth.com).*