

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about COVID-19 (coronavirus)

Current as of **February 28, 2020**

*These FAQs are specific to Salt Lake County or Utah. For FAQs about COVID-19 in general or the national and international response, visit the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention FAQ site at [CDC.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html).*

## **Q: Should Salt Lake County residents be concerned about COVID-19?**

The risk of Utahns contracting COVID-19 locally is still low, but everyone can do their part to help prepare for this emerging public health threat:

- Get an annual flu vaccine.
- Practice good health habits that help your immune system work effectively:
  - Get appropriate sleep.
  - Stay physically active.
  - Manage stress.
  - Drink plenty of fluids.
  - Eat nutritiously.
- Keep on hand at least a two-week supply of food, as well as prescription and nonprescription drugs.

## **Q: Will COVID-19 come to Utah, and what happens when it does?**

We expect to eventually see cases of this illness locally. How soon is difficult to know, but Utah's public health system has plans and procedures in place that are designed to help limit the spread of infection within our community. These plans and procedures include isolating ill people and quarantining people who may have been exposed, as well as potentially cancelling school, church, and community events. To successfully implement these things, public health will need cooperation from everyone in the community, and residents should begin thinking now about how their family routines may need to adapt in the event of a school closure or other interruption that affects our community's resources.

## **Q: What can Salt Lake County residents do to protect themselves when COVID-19 is here?**

Because there is currently no vaccine or specific treatment for COVID-19, it's essential that everyone take actions that help prevent the spread of all illnesses:

- Stay home if you are ill.
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly: scrub with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid close contact with ill people.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow; do not cough or sneeze into your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid sharing food and personal items.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a bleach-based cleaning product.

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**Q: What would trigger a school closure or other cancellations?**

If Salt Lake County begins seeing widespread community transmission—which means that many of the respiratory illnesses in our community are due to COVID-19—then our isolation and quarantine measures haven't done enough, so we need to start considering school and mass gathering cancellations.

**Q: If I think I have contracted COVID-19, what should I do?**

If you have traveled in the last two weeks to an [area experiencing community transmission of COVID-19](#) and develop flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), call your health care provider before visiting unannounced. If your provider determines you need to be seen, they may have special instructions about how you should arrive to minimize exposing other people. Some health care providers also have a telehealth ability so patients can be evaluated for their symptoms without visiting a clinic in-person.

**Q: Do I need to buy a face mask?**

Surgical-type face masks help keep respiratory droplets from getting out into the environment; they do not keep airborne germs from getting in. So while they can be useful for preventing sick people from making others sick, they are not particularly useful for keeping healthy people from getting sick.

Wearing an N95 respiratory mask can help prevent illness, but the mask must be fit-tested and worn correctly, and they should be reserved for specific populations who are at the greatest risk, such as health care professionals. Widespread public use is not necessary.