

How your employees can protect themselves during the coronavirus outbreak



TRS-ActiveCare is here to help you and your employees stay healthy and informed. Because of worldwide developments in the coronavirus outbreak, we want to provide updated resources in response to this threat. Below, your employees will find steps to take if they or a loved one has contracted the coronavirus and how to get tested.

What is the coronavirus?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are actively monitoring the outbreak of a coronavirus strain (SARS-CoV-2), referred to as COVID-19, a disease that causes respiratory illness. The virus, which has infected over half a million people worldwide and caused deaths, originated in Wuhan City, China. The number of cases in the United States continues to rapidly grow. Visit the CDC's [Travelers' Health website](#) for travel notices and precautions.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Common signs of infection include:

- respiratory symptoms,
- fever,
- cough,
- shortness of breath, and
- breathing difficulties.

In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), kidney failure and even death. People with heart and lung disease or weakened immune systems, as well as infants and older adults, are at higher risk for lower respiratory tract illness.

How is COVID-19 spread?

Human coronaviruses are usually spread from an infected person to others through:

- coughing and sneezing,
- close personal contact (such as shaking hands),
- touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands, and (rarely)
- fecal contamination.

How your employees can protect themselves and others

Although there are currently no vaccines available to protect against human coronavirus infection, your employees may be able to reduce their risk of infection by:

- washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds,
- avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and
- avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

For information about handwashing, see the CDC's [Clean Hands Save Lives](#) website.

What should employees do if they suspect that they or a loved one has contracted COVID-19?

Most people with common human coronavirus illness will recover on their own. Although there are no specific treatments for illnesses caused by human coronaviruses, your employees can take the following actions to relieve symptoms if they are mildly sick:

- Take pain and fever medications (caution: do not give aspirin to children).
- Use a room humidifier or take a hot shower to help ease a sore throat and cough.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Stay home and rest.

If your employees are concerned about their symptoms, they should see a local health care provider.

Who should be tested for COVID-19?

The CDC recommends that anyone who has shown symptoms of COVID-19, anyone who has visited Wuhan City, China, and anyone who has been in contact with someone who is suspected to have or who has been confirmed of having the coronavirus within the last 14 days should be tested.

Where can your employees go to be tested?

The U.S Food and Drug Administration has issued an [emergency use authorization \(EUA\)](#) to enable emergency use of the CDC's 2019-nCoV Real-Time RT-PCR Diagnostic Panel. The authorization allows the use of this test at any CDC-qualified lab in the U.S. The CDC website notes that "if you have symptoms of COVID-19 and want to get tested, try calling your state or local health department or a medical provider. While supplies of these tests are increasing, it may still be difficult to find a place to get tested."

What we're doing to help your employees

- **We're waiving copays for all COVID-19 testing.** If your employees meet the CDC guidelines for testing and if their doctor requests a test, they can get tested at any approved lab.
- **We're offering zero-copay video visits for the next 90 days, until June 4, 2020.** Costs will be waived for all telemedicine visits through 1) TRS Virtual Health powered by Teladoc, and 2) network providers who deliver virtual care, such as live video conferencing.
- **CVS Caremark® is offering free home delivery for prescription medications.** They are also authorizing refills on maintenance medications before a 30-day prescription is up.
- **For members diagnosed with COVID-19, Aetna® will send a Healing Better Care Package with CVS Health® over-the-counter medications to help the healing process.** The package also includes resources, personal care items and household supplies to help keep others in the home protected from potential exposure.
- **We've created a COVID-19 communication for you to share with employees.** [Download our resource](#) here, which you can send directly to your employees.

Get more information on the coronavirus

www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/news_coronavirus.aspx

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019