

## Common Questions About COVID-19

### What is COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses, some causing illness in people and others that circulate among animals, including camels, cats and bats. Rarely, animal coronaviruses can evolve and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with recent outbreaks of MERS and SARS.

### How can COVID-19 be prevented?

- Follow the social distancing and stay-at-home orders from the Governor and local leaders.
- Follow information from the Louisiana Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) if you do not have soap and water.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Do not have close contact with people who are sick and stay home if you are feeling ill
- Stay away from the vulnerable population (older people and people with health conditions like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or asthma, liver disease, HIV/AIDs, and kidney disease/dialysis patients)
- Clean and disinfect surfaces daily.

### What if I suspect I have COVID-19?

If you think you may have COVID-19, call your primary care physician. If you do not have one, call the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211.

Your provider will ask you about your symptoms, recent travel, and people you have been in contact with. Depending on your symptoms, you may be tested for flu and, if negative, your provider will decide if you can and should be tested for COVID-19.

If you are tested for COVID-19, it will take several days (sometimes a week or more) to get the results. There is no rapid test for COVID-19 like there is for the flu and other viruses.

While you wait for your results, will be told to go home and self-isolate. Do not go out in public and avoid contact with all others, even if you start to feel better, until your self-isolation time is over.

### What does Telemedicine mean?

Telemedicine (sometimes called telehealth) refers to the practice of caring for patients remotely, using technology, when the provider and patient are not in the same place. Usually, the provider and patient use technology that allows them to do a live audio-video visit (like a video chat).

### Why is my provider asking me to do Telemedicine?

The Louisiana Department of Health has directed all healthcare providers to use telemedicine for any care that is safe to do as a telemedicine visit.

Using telemedicine lets you see your doctor from home so you can follow social distancing and stay-at-home orders and still get the care you need. Following social distancing and stay-at-home orders helps prevent the spread of COVID-19, especially to those who are most vulnerable, older people and those with existing health conditions.

### **What if I can't do a video visit?**

You may be able to do a visit on the phone. It will depend on your insurance, your provider, and what care you need. Let your provider know that you can't do a video visit and ask them if a phone visit is an option for you.

### **Why can't I have in-person appointments with my provider (Dr., NP, or PA)?**

Many clinics are not taking walk in patients at this time in order to practice social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This helps to protect all patients, including you and your family, the clinic staff, and patients who are elderly or have other health conditions.

### **Why are some patients still seeing my provider in person?**

Depending on the patient's symptoms, your provider may decide that they need to see a patient in person.

### **What should I expect if my provider determines I need an in-person visit?**

Your provider wants to make sure you always get the care that you need. During a telemedicine visit, your provider will tell you if you need to come in for an in-person visit to get the best care or for testing.

If you have to go to a doctor for any reason, your provider or clinic staff will screen you either on the phone/telemedicine visit or when you arrive at the clinic with these questions:

- Have you traveled recently?
- Have you been in contact with someone who was diagnosed with COVID-19?

As a precaution, you may be asked to wear a mask for your visit. It is also likely your nurse and/or doctor will also wear a mask and other personal protective equipment for your safety and the safety of the staff.

**If you have questions about coronavirus, please contact the Louisiana 211 Network by dialing 211. Or, you can text the keyword LACOVID to 898-211 for the most current information about the outbreak as it becomes available.**