We know that COVID-19 is a new illness caused by a novel virus. The type of virus that causes COVID-19 is called a coronavirus. Coronaviruses can cause illnesses as varied as the common cold to more serious illnesses like SARS, MERS, and now COVID-19. Because COVID-19 is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, there is no natural immunity among humans, meaning that many people can get the illness and a small percentage will get severely ill. This resource provides information on how this virus is transmitted, the symptoms to look for, and how to monitor the physical health status of individuals and caregivers.

**HOW IS CORONAVIRUS TRANSMITTED?**

COVID-19 is transmitted by respiratory droplets, which we all can produce when coughing, sneezing, or even speaking. These droplets can also stay for short periods of time on surfaces. This means that being in the vicinity of someone who coughs, sneezes or accidentally spits or touching an object that has virus particles and then putting your hands on your eyes, nose, or mouth can result in getting the disease.
WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19?

There are a wide range of symptoms seen in those with COVID-19. These symptoms can appear anywhere from 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. **Among the most common symptoms are:**

- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or Difficulty Breathing
- Fever (generally greater than 100.4°F)
- Chills
- Muscle Aches and Pains
- Sore Throat
- New Loss of Taste and/or Smell
- An emerging, but rare symptom of Covid-19 is changes in the color of toes, almost like someone has been out in the cold without proper foot covering, to a pink or purple color.

**For Children:** There is concern for a new, rare syndrome that may be related to COVID-19. If children develop all or some of these symptoms, you should immediately speak with the pediatrician or seek emergency care.

- Fever for more than 36-48 hours and/or
- Have red eyes
- Abdominal Pain
- Chest Pain
- Lethargy (overly sleepy and cannot be woken up)
- Problems Urinating
- Skin rashes to the hands or arms
- Pallor (turning pale in color)
WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE

Thankfully, most people who get COVID-19 will recover as they would from other flu-like illnesses, with rest, staying hydrated, and taking over-the-counter medications for fever. But there is a small percentage of patients who get more sick. These individuals generally have other medical conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, lung disease, and conditions that suppress the immune system. Individuals with obesity or who are elderly also are at higher risk for more serious illness.

You should immediately speak with your doctor or seek emergency care if you or your loved one has:

• Shortness of Breath
• Worsening ability to stay hydrated or eat food
• Chest Pain
• Alteration in mental status (not acting right)
• Lethargy,
• Turning blue or pale

As this is a new disease, there is much that is not known about COVID-19. Ultimately, if you are concerned about your loved one, please discuss with your doctor the symptoms you are seeing and whether further medical care is needed. Emergency departments are well equipped and ready to care for any patient possibly with COVID-19.

AUTISM AND COVID-19

There is no evidence that those with autism and/or intellectual disabilities will have different symptoms, but, given their common impairments in communication, these individuals may not express the presence of these symptoms in the same way. Families and caregivers should consider how their loved ones have typically shown the above symptoms in the past as they commonly overlap with other upper respiratory illnesses like influenza.
Checklist for Monitoring Health Status

Taking into consideration individuals with autism and/or intellectual disabilities may have impairments in communication, these individuals may not express the presence of these symptoms in the same way. Therefore, it is important for families and caregivers to consider how the individual expresses illness and have a way to assess the health status of the individual. The following checklist can be used to monitor the health status of the individual and/or those family members and caregivers providing care.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Symptoms</th>
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