

Frequently Asked Questions to Support Central Nebraskans

What should I do when I feel ill?

You have probably heard people talk about COVID-19 or the coronavirus and you wonder if your symptoms could be a result of this virus. Call either of these toll free, confidential help lines to discuss your symptoms and other questions. You can call these numbers even if you are not feeling ill or if you think you may have been near someone who has been tested positive for the COVID-19 or coronavirus.

Nebraska COVID-19 Hotline: (402) 552-6645

Kearney Regional Medical Center

Information about your risk of having COVID-19, as well as next steps to get care if you need it.

Helpline: 308-338-3319

Website (with questionnaire): <https://www.kearneyregional.com/covid19/>

CHI Health Good Samaritan

Information about your risk of having COVID-19, as well as next steps to get care if you need it.

Helpline: 402-717-2001

Website (with questionnaire and provider chat): <https://www.chihealth.com/coronavirus>

Nebraska Children's Physicians

Information about your child's risk of having COVID-19, as well as next steps to get care if you need it.

Helpline: 402-955-3200

<https://www.childrensomaha.org/>

When should I call a doctor?

When it comes to COVID-19, you've probably been told to talk with your Primary Care Provider (PCP). Your PCP is the provider you see for routine medical care like check-ups, physicals, or medication refills. If you do not have a PCP, and you're having symptoms of COVID-19, here are the clinics in town who can help. If you're not sure what is right for you, call first to ask questions! Be very careful to stay home and away from people as much as possible while you have symptoms of COVID-19 or coronavirus.

If you don't have insurance, please tell them when you schedule or check in for your appointment, and ask about financial assistance or payment plans to help with the bill. These clinics will do their best to get you the care you need and help you figure out how to pay for it. Then reach out to HelpCare Clinic – our community's free clinic – for follow up care in the future. HelpCare is not equipped to test or treat for COVID-19, but can help with routine medical care for those who qualify.

Family Practice

For COVID-19 symptoms, Family Practice has a respiratory clinic in a tent in the parking lot of their building. There they will help figure out if your symptoms are related to COVID-19 or another virus.

Address: 620 E 25th Street, Kearney, NE 68847

Phone: 308-865-2767

CHI Health Kearney Clinic

For COVID-19 symptoms, Kearney Clinic is asking patients to come through a separate entrance. Please call ahead and explain your symptoms – they will give you directions from there.

Address: 211 W 33rd Street, Kearney, NE 68845

Phone: 308-865-2141

NE Children's Physicians Clinic – Kearney

For COVID-19 symptoms, Kearney Clinic is asking patients to come through a separate entrance. Please call ahead and explain your symptoms – they will give you directions from there.

Address: 211 W 33rd Street, Kearney, NE 68845

Phone: 308-234-5613

Platte Valley Medical Group

For COVID-19 symptoms, Platte Valley has a respiratory clinic with a separate entrance. This clinic is for current Platte Valley patients or those without a primary care provider. You will need to call ahead and schedule an appointment – and follow all of the instructions they give you for checking in for your appointment.

Address: 816 22nd Avenue, Suite 100, Kearney, NE 68845

Phone: 308-865-2263

HelpCare Clinic

HelpCare Clinic is not equipped to test for or treat patients with symptoms of COVID-19 right now. For uninsured, low-income patients, HelpCare can provide other types of medical care to help you stay healthy. Patients will need an appointment and must qualify to be seen at HelpCare. Please call with any questions about finding a PCP when you do not have health insurance.

Phone: 308-224-2392

When should you think about going to the emergency room?

Our local emergency rooms are for just that – emergencies! Only go the emergency room for life-threatening emergencies or if you have an urgent need after all of the other clinics have closed. For COVID-19, emergency symptoms can include trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in your chest, new confusion or inability to arouse (unresponsiveness), and bluish lips or face. If you are worried about severe or concerning symptoms, call the emergency room – and always call ahead before visiting the emergency room with COVID-19 symptoms. They probably have different processes to get you checked in without putting other patients in danger of contracting the virus.

What if I am nervous about going to a clinic?

For your health and the health of other patients as this virus spreads, many clinics are offering telehealth services. This might include a phone call or video chat with the provider to talk about your symptoms. When calling to schedule an appointment, ask about telehealth. In many cases, these virtual appointments will be billed as a regular visit at that clinic. Right now, though, telehealth consults through CHI Health are free at: <https://www.chihealth.com/en/services/virtual-care.html>

In our area, testing for COVID-19 is not readily available to anyone and everyone. Because of the supplies available in our state, providers will select certain people to be tested based on their exposure, severity of symptoms and risk for complications. Please work with the provider to explain your symptoms and health history as best you can – and know that even if you have symptoms of COVID-19, you might not get tested at this time.

How does this virus spread?

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from someone who is infected. People who are infected often have symptoms of illness. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.

COVID-19 is a new disease and **we are still learning about how it spreads** and the severity of illness it causes.

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- Some recent studies have suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

[Maintaining good social distance](#) (about 6 feet) is very important in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about this virus.

[Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Also, [routinely clean](#) frequently touched surfaces.

How easily the virus spreads

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious, like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, which means it goes from person-to-person without stopping.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people. Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggest that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious.

What are the six things Governor Pete Rickett's recommending for all Nebraskans to stay healthy?

As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic continues, Nebraska is expected to reach our peak in the coming weeks. To help Nebraska stay focused on slowing the spread of the virus, I recently designated April 10th – April 30th as “21 Days to Stay Home and Stay Healthy.” As the virus starts to peak in our state, we need Nebraskans to be especially mindful about limiting its spread.

During this critical phase, we are asking everyone to follow six rules to keep Nebraska healthy:

1. Stay home. No non-essential errands and no social gatherings. Respect the ten-person limit.
2. Socially distance your work. Work from home or use the six-foot rule as much as possible in the workplace.
3. Shop alone and only shop once a week. Do not take family with you.
4. Help kids follow social distancing. Play at home. No group sports. And no playgrounds.
5. Help seniors stay at home by shopping for them. Do not visit long-term care facilities.
6. Exercise daily at home or with an appropriately socially-distanced activity.

These six rules will unite Nebraskans in our shared goal of slowing the spread of the virus as we pass through its peak period.