



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. How can I prevent COVID-19?

The best way to prevent COVID-19 is to avoid being exposed. The Ministry of Health recommends practicing everyday preventive measures such as:

- i. Washing your hands often with soap and water then sanitize
- ii. Avoid touching your eyes, face and mouth
- iii. Avoid close contact and maintain 6 feet between each other
- iv. Cover your coughs and sneezes and
- v. Always wear a face mask properly covering your nose and mouth.
- vi. Stay home when ill

### 2. What is contact tracing?

Contact tracing is a control measure used by the Ministry of Health to prevent further spread of COVID-19. It slows the spread by:

- a) Letting people know they may have been exposed to COVID-19 and should monitor their health for signs and symptoms of COVID-19
- b) Helping people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 get tested
- c) Asking persons to self-isolate if they have COVID-19 or self-quarantine if they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19

### 3. I am a close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19. What should I do?

A person who is sick with COVID-19 is most likely to spread the COVID-19 virus to others just before they have symptoms and at the beginning of their symptoms. That is why anyone who is sick should

- a) Avoid contact with others and stay home unless to get medical care.
- b) 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, eyes or nose. That is why it is so important to

- c) Be alert for symptoms: monitor for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
- d) Continue to wash your hands often and sanitize.
- e) If you are a close contact to a person with COVID-19, it is recommended that you self-quarantine and stay away from other people as much as possible for 14 days from the last date of exposure to the infected person.  
It is recommended that you also get tested but no sooner than 3-5 days after first contact with the person when they were infectious with the virus or immediately if you develop symptoms. Do consult with your local provider on this.

**IMPORTANT:**

**You must complete the full 14 days of quarantine even if you test negative because it is possible the virus was not yet able to be detected by the lab test.**

- Call the MOH hotline in your district and provide your name, address, and phone number
- Share details of the contact with a positive COVID-19 case (when and where, for how long, at what distance) to determine your level of risk of being infected which will guide the next steps
- Describe your signs and symptoms, if none, monitor appearance of signs and symptoms
- Follow recommendations outlined in item (1)

**4. I was in the same room or building as someone who tested positive to COVID-19, but not in close contact with him/her. What should I do?**

If you were not in close/direct contact with someone with COVID-19, your risk of catching the virus from that person is low. Follow the general precautions, including physical distancing, washing your hands often, and avoiding close contact with people who are sick.

- Assess the risk: If the positive case is symptomatic or asymptomatic? What was the distance between both? Did both wear a face mask?
- The risk is greater if the positive is symptomatic, the distance between both was less than 6 feet and if the duration of closeness was equal or greater than 15 minutes or (to be determined by health officer).
- If the information in the previous bullet is positive, the individual is considered at high risk
- Self-monitor for signs and symptoms
- Follow recommendations in item (1)

**5. I have been around someone else who was exposed to a person with COVID-19. What should I do?**

- To be exposed to COVID-19 you must have been in close contact with a person showing symptoms (less than 6 feet) for at least 15 minutes (to be determined by health officer)

and not wearing a mask.

It is recommended to watch for symptoms, avoid close contact with people who are sick, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. Continue to practice physical distancing.

**IMPORTANT:**

**You do not need to self-quarantine unless you develop symptoms or if the person identified as a close contact develops COVID-19.**

**6. I live in the same house as someone who is under quarantine. What should I do?**

Quarantine separates people who were exposed to an infectious disease, like COVID-19, to see if they become sick and prevent spread of disease.

For COVID-19, the quarantine period is 14 days after the person's last exposure to someone with COVID-19. If you are in a house that also has a quarantined individual, that person should try as much as possible to:

- a) Keep his/her distance from the others in the house. This can be a great challenge, especially when the quarantined individual is a child or a parent caring for a child.
- b) Ensure persons are kept in a separate room, and use a separate bathroom, if available.
- c) Before going into shared areas, the person quarantining should wash his/her hands, maintain at least 6 feet of distance between themselves and others, and cover any coughs or sneezes.
- d) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and do not share personal household items like dishes, glasses, utensils or towels.
- e) Others in the house should also maintain good hand washing practices.
- f) The quarantined individual should immediately contact 0-800-MOH-CARE or his/her healthcare provider if symptoms worsen.

**7. I am caring for someone who is sick with symptoms of COVID-19. What should I do?**

The quarantined person should be isolated from the rest of persons in the household and must remain in enclosed bedroom with only the minimal communication required with other healthy persons

- a) The caretaker must follow recommendations in item (1)
- b) If possible, have them use a separate bathroom.
- c) If only one bathroom available, the caretaker performs thorough cleaning after each use
- d) Avoid sharing personal household items, like dishes, towels, and bedding.
- e) If the sick person needs to be around others, he/she should wear a facemask ALWAYS
- f) You should wear a facemask if you're in the same room as the infected person.

- g) Always wash your hands while caring for them, as well as frequently throughout the day.
- h) Frequently, clean and disinfect all surfaces that are touched often (door knobs, tables, others).
- i) NO visitors allowed.
- j) Monitor the person for worsening symptoms and if the person is getting sicker, call 0-800-MOH-CARE.
- k) It is recommended that you get tested but no sooner than seven (7) days after the person you are caring for became sick or immediately if you develop symptoms.
- l) If you test positive (that you have the virus), you should isolate at home (see above).
- m) If you test negative (that you do not have the virus), you must quarantine at home for 14 days after the person you are caring for was cleared to stop isolating (see above).

#### **8. Should I wear a face mask?**

Reduce your risk of COVID-19. Wear a face mask and help us protect one another. You could spread COVID-19 to others if you are infected with the virus even if you do not feel sick. The law requires that you wear a mask---when you go out in public, for example to the grocery store and if physical distancing is not possible - on public transportation. Wear a mask properly, ensure it covers from the top of your nose, mouth and beyond your chin.

#### **9. Should I go to the nearest health facility once I start feeling unwell and/or start with symptoms such as runny nose, sneezing, coughing?**

Feel sick, stay home and continue to monitor your signs and symptoms. **If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call your health provider before visiting or Call 0-800-664-2273 for more guidance.**

#### **10. When do I seek help from the nearest health facility?**

Call 0-800-MOH-CARE or your nearest health care facility if symptoms worsen or you experience difficulty breathing.

#### **11. What is community spread?**

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected. The Government of Belize has declared community spread in Shipyard, Santa Martha, Guinea Grass, all in the Orange Walk District, as well as Ambergris Caye. Reminder that this information changes daily.

#### **12. If I need mental health services, who do I contact?**

You can contact the COVID-19 hotline numbers in the districts for more information. This can be found @belizehealth on the Ministry of Health's Facebook page. Persons can also call the 0-800-MOH-CARE toll free number.