

## WHAT IS COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness, including fever, cough and shortness of breath. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel (new) coronavirus. It is not the same as other types of coronaviruses that commonly circulate among people and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

## HOW DOES COVID-19 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 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 when an infected person coughs or sneezes. 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, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

## OBJECTIVE

It is the objective of the State of Indiana to protect public health and slow the rate of transmission of the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”); to protect all Hoosiers including those most likely to experience severe symptoms, such as older Hoosiers and those with underlying chronic conditions; and to minimize the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

## RECOMMENDATION AND GUIDANCE

The Indiana State Department of Health [ISDH] strongly recommends the following for the next 30 days, unless extended:

- Non-essential gatherings of 250 people or more should be postponed or canceled. This includes any event or gathering of people who are in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, cafeteria, church, stadium, arena, large conference room, or meeting hall. This would include gatherings such as concerts, conferences, social and community events.
- Smaller, non-essential gatherings held in venues which do not allow social distancing of six (6) feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
- If an event cannot be canceled or postponed, institute the following precautionary measures:
  - Use phones or video conferencing to reduce the number attending and the need for close interactions;
  - Stagger activities or add frequency of an event to spread out attendance;
  - Encourage those in a high-risk group to not attend the event;
  - Recommend that attendees stay home if they have a fever and/or respiratory symptoms;
  - Practice social distancing, such as adding distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables, and also limit the number of people in lines;
  - Avoid direct physical contact with others, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
  - Event organizers should:
    - Explore alternative site design and set-up;
    - Prop doors open to avoid touching;
    - Increase ventilation within the facility;

- Increase the number of hygiene stations;
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as handrails and countertops, during the event.
- For those who attend the event, recommend they take the following precautions to prevent possible transmission of the COVID-19 before, during, and after the event:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
  - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or into a tissue;
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Certain activities are essential to the functioning of our state and must continue. The goal of these recommendations is to prevent people from being together unnecessarily where viruses can be easily spread to others. This guidance does not apply to essential activities or services. Hence, this guidance does not apply to the workplace, essential public transportation and travel, or shopping.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The ISDH call center for healthcare providers and members of the public who have concerns about COVID-19 is now staffed from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at 317-233-7125. After-hours calls should be directed to 317-233-1325 and will be answered by an on-call epidemiologist.

Additional information and resources for COVID-19 are available at the links below.

- CDC COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- ISDH COVID-19 webpage: <https://on.in.gov/COVID19>