COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person-to-person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new form of coronavirus that was first found in people in December 2019. It can cause severe illness in some people.

How is it spread?

- People with COVID-19 can easily spread it to others. The virus is found in droplets from the throat and nose. When someone coughs, sneezes, sings, or even shouts, other people near them can breathe in those droplets.
- The virus can also spread when someone touches an object with the virus on it. If that person then uses their hands to touch their face, mouth, or eyes, the virus can make them sick.

What are the signs and symptoms*? 

- Cough (new or worsening of chronic cough)
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Fever
- Chills
- Runny nose
- Muscle ache
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell

*Some people may also experience fatigue or have gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain.

What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?

- Contact your doctor and ask to be tested.
- Stay home and isolate yourself from people and animals in your home.
- Complete an online health screening assessment and a licensed health practitioner will contact you.
- See if a community testing site is available near you.

NOTE: Not everyone with COVID-19 has all of these symptoms and some people have no symptoms. You can still spread the virus to others even if you have mild or no symptoms.
What should I do if I was exposed to a person with COVID-19?

- It can take up to 14 days after being exposed to a person with COVID-19 before symptoms begin. A 14-day quarantine remains the safest option if you are a close contact of someone who has COVID-19. Quarantine may be shortened to 10 days, provided people still monitor for symptoms for the full 14 days. Quarantine may be shortened further to 7 days if a person receives a negative test result (PCR or antigen) that was collected on day 6 or 7.

- If you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and were in close contact with someone with COVID-19, you do not have to quarantine if you meet ALL of the following criteria:
  - Your exposure to someone with COVID-19 happened at least two weeks after receiving the last dose of your vaccine series; and
  - You have not had any symptoms of COVID-19 since your last close contact.
  - Continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days after your last close contact.
  - If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, isolate from others, contact your health care provider, and get tested.

- Minimize contact with other people and animals in your home, wear a face mask or covering if you have to be around others, and monitor for symptoms.

How can it be prevented?

Avoid close contact with others and practice physical distancing.

- Stay at home as much as possible, except for essential trips. Cancel events and avoid groups, gatherings, play dates, and nonessential appointments.
- Avoid gatherings of 10 or more people.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people, when possible.

Practice good hand hygiene.

- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your face, eyes, and mouth when in public.
- Do not cough or sneeze into your hands. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.

Clean and disinfect.

- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily (for example, tables, countertops, light switches, doorknobs, and cabinet handles). See CDC’s recommendations for household cleaning and disinfection webpage.
- Use and follow instruction on household cleaning products.
- Wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting. Gloves should be carefully removed and discarding after cleaning, followed by washing hands immediately.
Get vaccinated when it is your turn.

- The COVID-19 vaccine can protect you from getting sick and prevent you from spreading the virus to those around you.
- For the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 vaccines, visit the DHS vaccine webpage: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine.htm