

Understanding COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

According to the Springfield-Greene County Health Department, “COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel (new) coronavirus that had not previously been identified in humans. A coronavirus is a virus that can cause respiratory illness ranging from the common cold to more severe illness such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).” The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. It is important to remember that these symptoms are common in many illnesses. In some individuals, COVID-19 is asymptomatic or quite mild; however, in others it can become very serious and lead to death.

How does COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is thought to spread between people who are in close contact (within about 6 feet), and through respiratory droplets produced when an infected coughs or sneezes. Because of this, Greene County has taken a number of measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, including limiting access to public spaces, limiting groups to no more than 10, and closing restaurants and bars. Social distance (maintaining at least 6 feet of space between you and others) is an essential part of disease reduction and authorities encourage people to stay at home when possible.

What should I do to protect myself from COVID-19?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers guidelines to help protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html> Some individuals are at higher risk of complications, including people over 60 and those with a variety of chronic health conditions.

What should I do if I think I or a family member has COVID-19?

If you believe you are sick, the CDC recommendations are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html> Following these recommendations will help to reduce the likelihood that you will spread COVID-19.

How do I get tested for COVID-19?

If you believe that you have been exposed to or have symptoms of COVID-19, contact your primary care provider. You should use telemedicine or virtual visit options if available; if not, please contact the office PRIOR to arriving so they can take appropriate precautions. Your primary care provider will make arrangements for COVID-19 testing if you qualify. Follow your doctor’s orders regarding isolation or quarantine, whether or not you are tested.