COVID-19 FAQ's

What is novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold.

A diagnosis with coronavirus 229E, NL63, OC43, or HKU1 is not the same as a COVID-19 diagnosis. Patients with COVID-19 will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

What is the source of the virus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses. Some cause illness in people, and others, such as canine and feline coronaviruses, only infect animals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses that infect animals have emerged to infect people and can spread between people. This is suspected to have occurred for the virus that causes COVID-19. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are two other examples of coronaviruses that originated from animals and then spread to people.

How does the virus 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 or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).

Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How do I get tested for COVID-19?

At this time, tests for COVID-19 require a provider order. Visiting a provider does not necessarily mean you need testing or that you will receive testing. Your provider will work with the Swain County Health Department to follow all appropriate guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(CDC) and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services to determine if testing is recommended based on your symptoms and recent travel history.

What are the qualifications for being tested for COVID-19?

Someone may be a candidate for testing if he or she has:

1. A fever and cough or shortness of breath AND has been in close contact with a laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 case; or
2. A fever and cough or shortness of breath and a history of travel from affected geographic areas; or

3. A fever and cough or shortness of breath requiring hospitalization with no other source of infection.

Can I pick up or buy a test kit for COVID-19?

No. At this time, tests for COVID-19 require a provider order and are not commercially available to the public.

What do I do if I've been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19? I want to be tested.

If you have been exposed to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you should self-monitor for fever or symptoms of respiratory illness for 14 days. If you begin to experience fever or symptoms of respiratory illness, and they are mild enough that you can manage them at home, you should remain at home in isolation. For details about how to correctly perform home isolation, tips for managing your illness at home with family members, and guidance on when you can discontinue home isolation, please visit the CDC's website (link to: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

If you are not experiencing symptoms, or you are experiencing mild symptoms you can manage at home in isolation, you do not need to seek medical care or testing.

I believe I have symptoms of COVID-19. What do I do next?

I'm experiencing mild symptoms right now, but I'm worried.

> If you are experiencing fever and/or mild symptoms of respiratory illness, you can and should isolate at home during illness. For details about how to correctly perform home isolation, tips for managing your illness at home with family members, and guidance on when you can discontinue home isolation, please visit the CDC's website (link to: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html)

> *Should I get tested?* Isolating yourself at home and self-monitoring mild symptoms is the best course of action unless you feel you need medical care.

Worsening symptoms – I need to see my provider.

> Be alert to any changing symptoms and seek prompt medical attention if your symptoms are getting worse. If you feel you need to visit your healthcare provider, call ahead before you arrive to tell them you're experiencing symptoms that may be related to COVID-19. This will allow your

provider's office staff to properly prepare for your visit and take the necessary precautions to keep others from being infected or exposed.

Will I be tested? Your provider will make this determination based on your symptoms, and recent travel history. You may or may not be tested, but your provider will follow all appropriate CDC and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.

Emergent symptoms – I am having difficulty breathing.

If you are experiencing a medical emergency, please call 9-1-1 and notify the dispatch agent that your emergency is related to possible COVID-19 symptoms.

Will I be tested? Your emergency medicine provider will make this determination based on your symptoms and recent travel history. You may or may not be tested, but your provider will follow all appropriate CDC and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services guidelines.