



DAVIDSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Protecting, Caring, Serving Our County

Lillian Koontz, MPA, REHS
HEALTH DIRECTOR

Rebecca Daley, RN, MHA
CHAIR, BOARD OF HEALTH

Michael Garrison, MD
MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19

All answers are based on guidance as of 9:00 on March 24, 2020. Answers will be updated as new guidance becomes available.

Question: Should I be tested for COVID-19?

Answer: Most people do not need to be tested for COVID-19. Leaving your home for testing could expose someone else to COVID-19. Individuals with mild symptoms (fever and cough) should stay home and recover. Call your doctor if you feel you need further medical assistance. At this time, testing is important for those who are seriously ill, in the hospital, individuals in nursing homes or long-term care, and healthcare workers and first responders who are providing care for those with COVID-19.

Question: What should I do if I develop a fever, cough, or shortness of breath?

Answer: If you have fever and a cough without shortness of breath, please stay home and recover. If you have or develop shortness of breath please call your medical provider. If you do not have an established medical provider, there are still opportunities for care. Novant Health urges you to use their COVID-19 line: 1-877-9NOVANT for information. Wake Forest Baptist Health also has a COVID hotline: 336-70-COVID

Question: Why does it take so long for a COVID-19 test to come back?

Answer: There is not rapid testing currently available for COVID-19. When a person is “tested for COVID-19” they are actually submitting a specimen to their medical provider who sends that specimen to a lab for testing. Once received, the lab will test and return results.

Question: Why are you putting out so much information?

Answer: This is a rapidly evolving situation, with multiple factors. While the recommendations for protecting yourself remain constant (wash hands, avoid crowds, telework when possible), in Davidson County we take guidance from the Governor, the CDC, and a variety of State Offices. At the local level we are here to assist our community with navigation of COVID-19 and to share the most up to date information.

Question: Why can't anyone tell me how many Davidson County residents have been tested for COVID-19?

Answer: Now there are many sources for COVID-19 testing: primary care providers, hospitals, pop-up testing locations, the local FQHC, and the local health department. State law requires only that positive tests results be reported, not the number of specimens collected, nor negative tests. Additionally, data regarding communicable diseases (COVID-19) is reported at the county of residence level, many of our Davidson County residents may seek care outside of our borders. Initially when there were very limited testing facilities, there was reliable data on the number of specimens submitted so that data was shared, but that is not the case any longer.

Question: What does presumptive positive mean?

Answer: The term presumptive positive has been used a couple of ways regarding COVID-19, 1-An individual who submits a specimen sample for COVID-19 may be told when the sample is collected that they should presume they are positive and take necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the virus until they hear back that their test result is negative. 2-When a testing lab first starts testing they are required to get their results confirmed by the CDC until it is determined their testing is accurate. A testing lab would get positive results that were “presumptive” until the CDC confirmed. As testing continues, labs will no longer be required to confirm with the CDC, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health no longer requires confirmation from the CDC.

Question: Why are only some businesses required to close?

Answer: Governor Cooper issued several Executive Orders that include business closures. The public health department is not responsible for the list of closures, or enforcement. The public health message remains, limit out of home travel to essential functions only.

Question: What is “flatten the curve”?

Answer: Flatten the curve is the term the state is using to describe the mitigation efforts we are currently undergoing. By reducing in-person interactions, limiting the size of gatherings, and practicing social distancing rather than seeing a spike in cases (picture an informational graph with a rise in the cases) the curve will be flattened, because there are fewer new cases.

Question: Why are schools closed and daycares open?

Answer: The Executive Order issued by Governor Roy Cooper closed all public schools K-12, through May 15. This Executive Order did not include daycare/childcare. Daycare centers operate under the Division of Child Development and Early Education. It is up to the discretion of the individual childcare center if they wish to remain open. NC DHHS has established guidance for childcare centers during COVID-19 and is encouraging childcare centers to remain open if possible to ensure essential workers may report to work.

Question: Why does my employer tell me that I cannot come back to work?

Answer: The health department is here to provide guidance for businesses, but every business has the authority to exercise their own employee health policy.

Question: When can someone who is sick return to normal activities?

Answer: Someone who is sick either from COVID-19 or any other illness should wait until it has been at least 7 days since they first had symptoms, have been fever free for at least 3 days without any medicine, and other symptoms have resolved.

Question: Why aren't coworkers of COVID-19 cases being quarantined?

Answer: Medical guidance is that only close contacts (less than 6 feet of separation for 10 minutes or more) should be excluded from KNOWN positive cases. In North Carolina the vast majority of COVID-19 tests are coming back negative, and now guidance is not to test folks with mild symptoms. As COVID-19 is now in the community transmission phase, it's more important than ever to adhere to guidance from the CDC---wash hands often, only leave home for essential reasons, and maintain social distancing---6 feet of separation.

###