



Chisago County Health and Human Services Public Health Division



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Understanding the Spectrum of COVID-19 Symptoms

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

According to Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, when coronavirus (COVID-19) is transmitted, it begins with viral droplets transmitted from an infected person's cough or sneeze and enters through your nose, mouth or eyes. If an infected person doesn't cough or sneeze directly on you, you can still get the virus if you touch something an infected person recently touched and then touch your nose, mouth or eyes.

Next, viral droplets travel to the back of your nasal passages and to the mucous membranes in your throat. That's where symptoms, such as a sore throat and dry cough, often start. The virus then spreads down the airway passages to the lungs. When the lungs' membranes become inflamed, it's hard for them to work properly. Symptoms can appear as soon as two days after exposure or as long as 14 days later, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). There is a median time of about five days. Symptoms can be mild, moderate, or severe.

Mild Symptoms

Most people, upwards of eighty percent, will have mild symptoms. Their recovery typically takes a couple of weeks. They might feel horrible, profoundly fatigued, with muscle aches, a bad cough, a fever and chest discomfort. Then, that goes away. Also, there are some people who never have symptoms, who never even know they had it.

Moderate Symptoms

Because we're so early into this, we have less information about these patients. Often, they spend a few days in the hospital. People feel more short of breath. Sometimes, an underlying condition like asthma is exacerbated. They may need oxygen for a few days. Additionally, there are patients who have high fevers or severe diarrheal illness with COVID-19. Those patients can get dehydrated and need IV fluids.

Severe Symptoms

Many of the sickest patients have acute respiratory distress syndrome [ARDS, a disease that floods the lungs with fluid and deprives people of oxygen]. These are the patients who end up on mechanical ventilators. Those least likely to recover seem to be older patients with preexisting illnesses, such as COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] or heart disease. However, ARDS is severe regardless of age.

For COVID-19 health concerns and questions, call the Chisago County COVID-19 Support Line at 651-257-1300, or visit Chisago County Public Health on Facebook.