



**NORTON SOUND
HEALTH CORPORATION**



IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING COVID-19 IN THE REGION

Steps to Identify and Manage Patients with COVID-19

- Step 1:** Patient (in Nome or any village) has symptoms of COVID19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath)
- Step 2:** Patient calls the Nurse Call Line- **907-443-6411**
- Step 3:** Patient is given a mask upon entering the facility (in Nome or Village)
- Step 4:** Patient is examined by provider (doctor, mid-level, or health aide)
- Step 5 (a):** Patient is tested for Flu and/or Strep throat (if sore throat exists). These tests are performed on site in the clinics and take 15-20 minutes for results to return.
- Step 5 (b):** If the patient is negative for flu/strep, then a test is done for other respiratory illnesses using a respiratory panel (available at all locations in region). These tests will be sent to the Nome lab, where test results will be available within a few hours after arriving. While awaiting the results of the respiratory panel, patients will be asked to self-quarantine at home.
- Step 6:** If patient tests positive for any of these tests, patient is diagnosed and treated appropriately
- Step 7:** If Patient tests negative on all these tests, and meets testing criteria, COVID-19 Test will be done
- Step 8:** Patient is swabbed in their local clinic and test kits are sent from Nome or village to State of Alaska lab in Anchorage/Fairbanks or Private Quest lab in Washington State.
- Step 9:** Pending test results take up to 5 business days and patient tested is asked to self-quarantine while results come back even if they are feeling better.
- Step 10:** NSHC is notified by the State lab or Quest of any results, and results will be passed to the ordering provider and shared with the patient and public health department.
- Step 11:** NSHC will communicate that COVID19 is present in the region (but will maintain patient confidentiality) by issuing a Press Release that will be broadcasted on the radio stations.
- Step 12:** If patient is stable, patient will be asked to self-quarantine for for a period determined by public health and medical teams; NSHC will manage and assist with this on a case-by-case basis.
- Step 13:** If patient requires more advanced care, patient will be admitted to the Norton Sound Regional Hospital or transferred to an Anchorage hospital if needed. Staff are trained and the hospital is prepared to manage COVID19 so it will not infect other patients. If the patient must travel from the village to Nome to be admitted, NSHC will medivac the patient. EMS crew and pilots will be protected and the patient will be masked.
- Step 14:** NSHC will manage COVID19 at its facility when medically possible. If a patient's condition deteriorates and a higher level of care is needed, NSHC will transport the patient via medivac.



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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How can I prevent myself from getting coronavirus? Please stay home and practice social distancing (stay away from crowds of ten or more). Wash your hands frequently using soap. Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough with your sleeve or a tissue.

I do not have running water, what can I do? First of all, change your water basin frequently. If you cannot change it frequently, use this bleach recipe only if you do not have an existing respiratory illness. Make sure you are using soap, this helps detach the virus from your hands.

The store is out of hand sanitizer, what can I do? Soap and water works best. Sing "Happy Birthday" twice as you wash your hands to ensure you washed them long enough. **NSHC has ordered alcohol hand sanitizer for all households without running water; the order is on the way.**

Do homemade masks work? Yes and No. While homemade masks are not as protective as commercially made N95 or procedure masks, they are a good choice for lower risk individuals and those who are not yet sick. NSHC will send a pattern that can be used to make a mask. Use tightly woven cotton fabric and wash before wearing—This mask can be used if you want to wear a mask.

Does NSHC have test kits at each location? Yes, NSHC is prepared with COVID19 testing at all locations and there are enough tests available locally with access to more resources as needed.

Are there enough medical staff members to help our communities during this crisis? Yes, NSHC has qualified, trained staff and enough of them.

Who is in charge of Incident Command at NSHC? NSHC has four clinical leads in charge of incident command: Dr. Mark Peterson- Village operations, Dr. Terry O'Malia- Nome Emergency Room and Acute Care, Dr. Tim Lemaire- Public Health and Prevention Education, Dr. Gary Kulka- Nome Primary Care and Cough & Cold Clinic

Is there any treatment for COVID19? No, there is no cure. Testing will only identify and confirm a case. Symptoms of respiratory distress will be managed under the care of your provider.

How many ventilators does NSHC have? NSHC has 11 ventilators, we have requested more from other suppliers.

Does NSHC have a back-up hospital prepared? NSHC is formalizing an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services to utilize the Nome Youth Facility as a back-up hospital. The facility will be prepared with internet, hospital equipment, and supplies.

My community is running out of food, are there food pantries being set up? Tribal leaders may contact NSHC Administration at 907-434-1927 or by email at agorn@nshcorp.org if your community is having food supply issues and NSHC will assist.

Are village airlines shutting down? Several villages have banned non-essential travel. NSHC recommends this for all communities and we assist with making sure test results and/or patients are still transported appropriately if your community decides this.



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What is NSHC's position on shutting down non-essential passenger travel to Nome on Alaska Airlines? NSHC recommends that non-essential travel be shut down immediately. NSHC is prepared to transport patients and tests as needed.

What is NSHC's position on shutting down non-essential passenger travel to the villages? NSHC recommends that all villages act now and ban non-essential passenger travel. Cargo flights will still be scheduled, and NSHC has plans in place to ensure patients and tests are transported as needed.

What if my children traveled and need to quarantine, but I do not need to quarantine and I am the only one available to take care of them? If children are older and more self-sufficient (like teenagers), they should try to isolate as much as possible. Stay 6 feet away from others, avoid sharing utensils, plates, or hygiene items, clean high-touch areas after use (bathrooms, microwave buttons, TV buttons, etc.). If children are younger and require more care, then the adult may have to quarantine with the child.

What if a resident, who has traveled, will not comply with the quarantine recommendations?

Quarantine recommendations for domestic travel (not international) are at this point only "recommendations" from the state and not enforceable by state authorities. Local tribes have sovereign authority to enforce their own travel restrictions or mandates.

How can I stay updated? Receive in your email inbox NSHC's daily Situation Report Updates by emailing Reba Lean at rlean@nshcorp.org. NSHC also has a facebook page:

www.facebook.com/NortonSoundHealthCorporation . NSHC has also put together a daily phone call using: 1-800-315-6338; access code: 03286#, for 11:00 a.m. NSHC Administration and Medical staff will provide updates each day and answer questions. NSHC will also share press releases with the radio stations often.

How long does coronavirus live? Coronavirus may live in the air for up to 2 hours, on cardboard for up to 24 hours, on stainless steel for up to two days, and on plastic for up to three days. It is important to wipe down the surfaces in your home often. Household bleach and other disinfecting cleaners may be used. Email Reba Lean at rlean@nshcorp.org if you are concerned and need supplies to wipe down your home.

Is NSHC open? NSHC is seeing patients in all locations on an urgent and emergent need only. Anything that can wait for 30 days should be delayed. Departments are staffed on a limited basis to practice social distancing within the building and patients are highly encouraged to stay at home if your symptoms can be managed with self-care.

NSHC wants to remind all patients that taking care of yourself, including managing chronic conditions and taking medications as prescribed will help keep you healthy and out of the hospital/clinic!

Is there a number I can call to ask questions about Coronavirus? Dial Alaska 211.

NSHC wants to remind the community that smokers (including tobacco, marijuana, or vaping) have higher rates of respiratory disease AND more risk of complications than non-smokers.