



The latest information from Mayo Clinic

March 24, 2020

*As the world's most trusted leader in health care, Mayo Clinic is committed to providing a comprehensive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayo is bringing together its expertise in patient care, research and education to advance tests and treatments for patients. The information in this update includes current policies, but this is an ever-evolving situation. For the latest updates, go to the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#).*

### **Mayo Clinic announces staff pay protection program**

On Monday, March 23, Mayo Clinic announced a staffing and pay protection program for allied health staff in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program guarantees that hourly allied health staff will continue to be paid their current rate of pay for normally scheduled hours through April 28. While Mayo can't predict how this crisis will unfold, the organization will do everything possible to support staff, their families and the communities they serve.

As part of Mayo Clinic's response to the pandemic, some staff may be asked to perform critically needed work in other areas, with appropriate training. Staff also may be asked to stay home if redeployment does not make sense based on Mayo Clinic's needs, understanding that they may be called back on short notice. While their duties, location and schedule may change, staff can count on receiving a paycheck at their current rate of pay for typically scheduled hours through April 28.

Mayo Clinic's dedicated staff members are focused on the mission-critical work of caring for their patients, their colleagues and the communities they serve. This pay protection program is Mayo Clinic's commitment to its staff, so they can keep patients safe and do what's best for themselves and those who rely on them. Mayo Clinic also is instituting a hiring freeze for jobs that do not contribute to immediate needs related to COVID-19 patient care, and is focusing on significant reductions to operating expenses not related to staff. Mayo will continue to reassess the situation as it gains a better understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Mayo Clinic Laboratories continues to expand testing capability**

Mayo Clinic has significantly expanded its capacity to test clinical samples for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. With new equipment and testing options that came online during the week of March 16, Mayo Clinic Laboratories in Rochester can now process over 4,000 tests daily, and increased capacity will be possible at Mayo Clinic in Arizona and Mayo Clinic in Florida this week, too. Although the expanding access to testing is an important development, it remains critical that providers use the

testing criteria recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local public health officials.

The expanded capacity is made possible in part by high-throughput diagnostic processors from Roche Diagnostics, running the Roche Cobas SARS-CoV-2 Test. This test processing capability is in addition to the COVID-19 testing developed by Mayo Clinic's Clinical Virology Laboratory.

Given this new capacity, Mayo Clinic is now processing tests for other health care providers in Minnesota and select areas of the country where there is high demand. Mayo also provided processing services to help address testing backlogs in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Colorado.

As the number of needed tests is likely to grow in coming weeks, Mayo is prepared to expand its capacity as needs arise as well as develop capabilities in highly valuable areas for tracking the virus, such as serologic testing using blood samples to detect viral antibodies indicating the presence of COVID-19.

### **Mayo Clinic further limits visitors during COVID-19 response**

As Mayo Clinic continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, additional changes have been made to policies for visitors to all Mayo Clinic locations. For everyone's safety, no visitors will be allowed in the hospital setting or Emergency Department. This policy took effect Sunday, March 22. Exceptions include consideration for childbirth; end-of-life care; hospitalized children; and other rare circumstances, as determined by the care team. Effective Monday, March 23, outpatient clinic patients may have one person accompany them, with consideration for special exceptions, as determined by patient care teams.

The ongoing safety of patients, staff and the community remains Mayo Clinic's primary focus. To protect patients and staff, Mayo Clinic will limit the number of visitors while there is a threat of COVID-19 transmission. These restrictions may be difficult for patients and their loved ones, but Mayo is taking these necessary and temporary steps to protect everyone's safety.

### **Mayo Clinic lights buildings in show of solidarity in fight against COVID-19**





Mayo Clinic joins with local communities, states, the nation and the world to lead the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. To honor those who are working tirelessly, and as a sign of support and solidarity, the Plummer Building in Rochester, Mayo Clinic Hospital in Arizona, and the sign at the main entrance to Mayo Clinic in Florida are being lighted in "Mayo blue." The buildings will be lighted, beginning at dusk. The lighting will continue for the foreseeable future as an ongoing show of support and a sign that Mayo's highest priority is to keep its staff,

patients and community strong and safe. It is also a reminder to everyone to do what they can to [slow the spread of COVID-19](#).

## **Importance of home exercise while being isolated**

As social distancing becomes the norm due to COVID-19, it's important to find new ways to remain active, as exercise is important. And to the extent possible, it's important to schedule time in your day and create a routine for maximum benefit.

"We need fitness for better overall health but in particular to keep our stress level down, especially now. We don't want our muscles to become sedentary since we're staying at home," says Sunni Ann Alessandria, D.P.T., a Mayo Clinic physical therapist.

Alessandria says that while items such as exercise bands, a fitness ball or weights are useful, you don't need special equipment to stay active at home.

"You can use basic things you can find at your home, including stairs, a wall, a chair — even things from your pantry like a can of soup or two-pound bag of flour," she says. "If you are outside, a curb or step will work well, too."

[Watch: "Importance of Home Exercise While Being in Isolation."](#)

## **What happens to your body when you have COVID-19?**

As the number of cases of COVID-19 rises, experts continue to learn more about the disease. They know that symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. But what does the virus do inside your body to cause those symptoms?

Neal Patel, M.D., a Mayo Clinic pulmonary and critical care medicine specialist, says that like most viruses, the virus that causes COVID-19 enters the body when you breathe it in through the mouth or nose. It also may enter through the eyes.

"Once it enters into the body, many different things happen," says Dr. Patel. "Initially, the virus can cause some damage locally where it enters. Then it moves further into the respiratory system."

[Watch: "Dr. Neal Patel Discusses What Happens to Your Body When Infected by the Virus That Causes COVID-19."](#)

If you show any sign of possible COVID-19 symptoms, call your local health care provider. Your provider or a nurse will direct you to the dedicated COVID-19 Nurse Line. If you meet testing criteria, you will be directed to one of the local testing locations. As this virus spreads rapidly, help Mayo minimize potential exposure to other patients by not coming into a clinic or hospital to be tested. You should call your local provider first to find out how to be evaluated.

Check the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) for additional updates on COVID-19. For all your COVID-19 coverage, go to the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#).

**COVID-19 Update is prepared by Mayo Clinic's Division of External Relations.  
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