Alaska Department of Health & Social Services

Division of Public Health Nursing

COVID Targeted Outbreak Response Team

C-TORT

Updated 05/13/2022

Covid Targeted Outbreak Response Team

Prevention Promotion Protection
ALASKA DIVISION OF Public Health

Who We Are

Covid
Targeted
Outbreak
Response
Team

- C-TORT is a 6-8 members team led by Public Health Nurse IVs and was selected from the previous COVID-19 response team that was established in 2020

- The team has extensive experience in the capacity of Contact Tracer/Case Investigator and are knowledgeable COVID-19 Mitigation Specialists

- Each team member has specialized training targeting the best current practices of COVID-19 outbreak mitigation

C-TORT Services Offered

- Develop customized COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies for your Industry
- Quarantine and Isolation Education/Recommendations
- COVID-19 Testing Guidance/Access to testing
- Training your organization on contact tracing techniques (as needed)
- Assistance during an outbreak
- Education on cleaning/sanitization protocols most effective in eliminating the COVID-19 virus from your workplace
- PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) education/recommendations for your staff and/or clientele
- Help you locate available critical resources in your community/industry as needed
- Help answer any questions you may have related to the current COVID-19 guidelines/recommendations

Contact Us

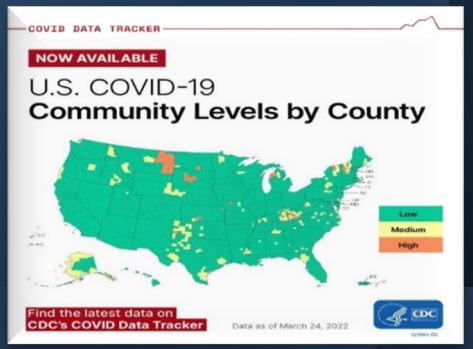
To initiate a “COVID-19 Mitigation Needs Assessment” for your organization:

- Please email **C-TORT** at covidresponse@alaska.gov to begin the referral process

- You can also call your local Public Health Center and ask that they put you in touch with **C-TORT**

Mitigation Strategies

Assessing Risk for Mitigation Planning



For more information:

[CDC COVID-10 Community Levels]

[State of Alaska Community Case Rate Map]

Mitigation measures can be scaled up and down depending on risk. The risk may be assessed at the National level, State level, local/community level, or the organizational level

- For example, case counts may be low in a community, but if your organization is experiencing an outbreak, it may be prudent to increase mitigation
- Community and organizational risk might be low, but if hospital capacity is at risk Statewide, it may also be prudent to increase mitigation
- In contrast, Statewide cases or Nationwide cases may be high, but if the risk is low in your organization and community, it may be appropriate to scale back some mitigation measures

Mitigation Planning

➢ COVID-19 Mitigation Needs Assessment Checklist

- Upon outreach the COVID-19 Mitigation specialist will complete the COVID-19 Mitigation Needs Assessment Checklist with the Organization

- Once complete, the checklist will assist the COVID-19 Mitigation Specialist and the organization in the creation of a unique COVID Mitigation Care Plan for their situation

- The COVID-19 Mitigation Specialist and Organization will determine a final care plan goal

Types of Mitigation Strategies

Outbreak Prevention & Health Promotion

Promoting Vaccination

"By providing information about COVID-19 vaccination and establishing supportive policies and equitable practices employers can help increase vaccine uptake among workers."

C-TORT could assist with:

- Coordinating vaccination clinics at your workplace
- Providing education resources for your employees

For more information go:

[CDC Workplace Vaccination Program]

[Alaska HSS Sleeves Up Alaska]

Potential benefits to employers:	Potential benefits to employees:
Keep the workforce healthy by preventing employees from getting COVID-19	Prevent COVID-19 illness and long-term complications
Help protect clients, customers, and visitors from COVID-19 illness	Reduce absences and doctor visits due to COVID-19 illness
Reduce absences due to COVID-19 illness	Help protect the family and household members from COVID-19 illness
Improve productivity	Improve morale
Improve morale, build trust, and be responsive to your employee's needs and cultural norms	

COVID-19 Testing/Treatment

- CTORT could assist with:
  - Education about types of COVID-19 tests available
  - Diagnostic test locator
  - Surveillance testing guidelines during outbreaks
  - Coordination for At-home testing
  - Facilitate access to therapeutics

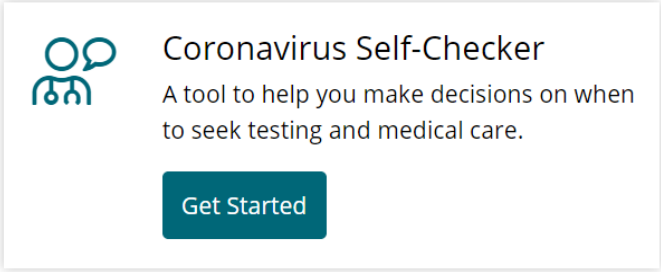
- For more information:

  COVID-19 Testing Site Locator

  Alaska HSS Covid-19 Testing

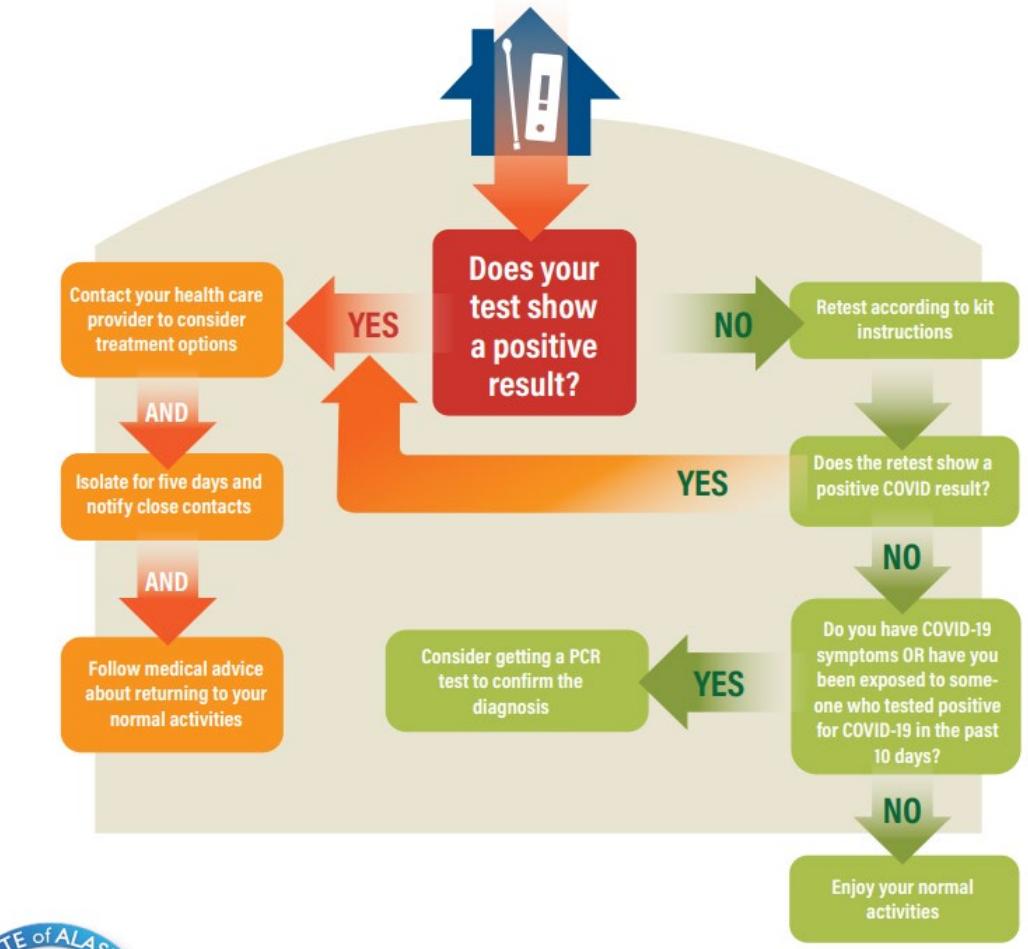
  CDC's Coronavirus Self-Checker

  COVIDRx.Alaska.gov



OTC COVID-19 Testing Flowchart

- An OTC (Over The Counter) test kit is a **convenient** option for anyone who needs to get tested for COVID-19.
- These tests can be **self-administered** anywhere and are designed to be **easy to use.** These tests can be useful to protect your health and to help stop the spread of COVID-19.



Visit the *CDC self-testing webpage.* for more information about these tests.
Call 1-907-531-3329 for more information about isolation and notifying close contacts

Assessing COVID-19 Risk factors

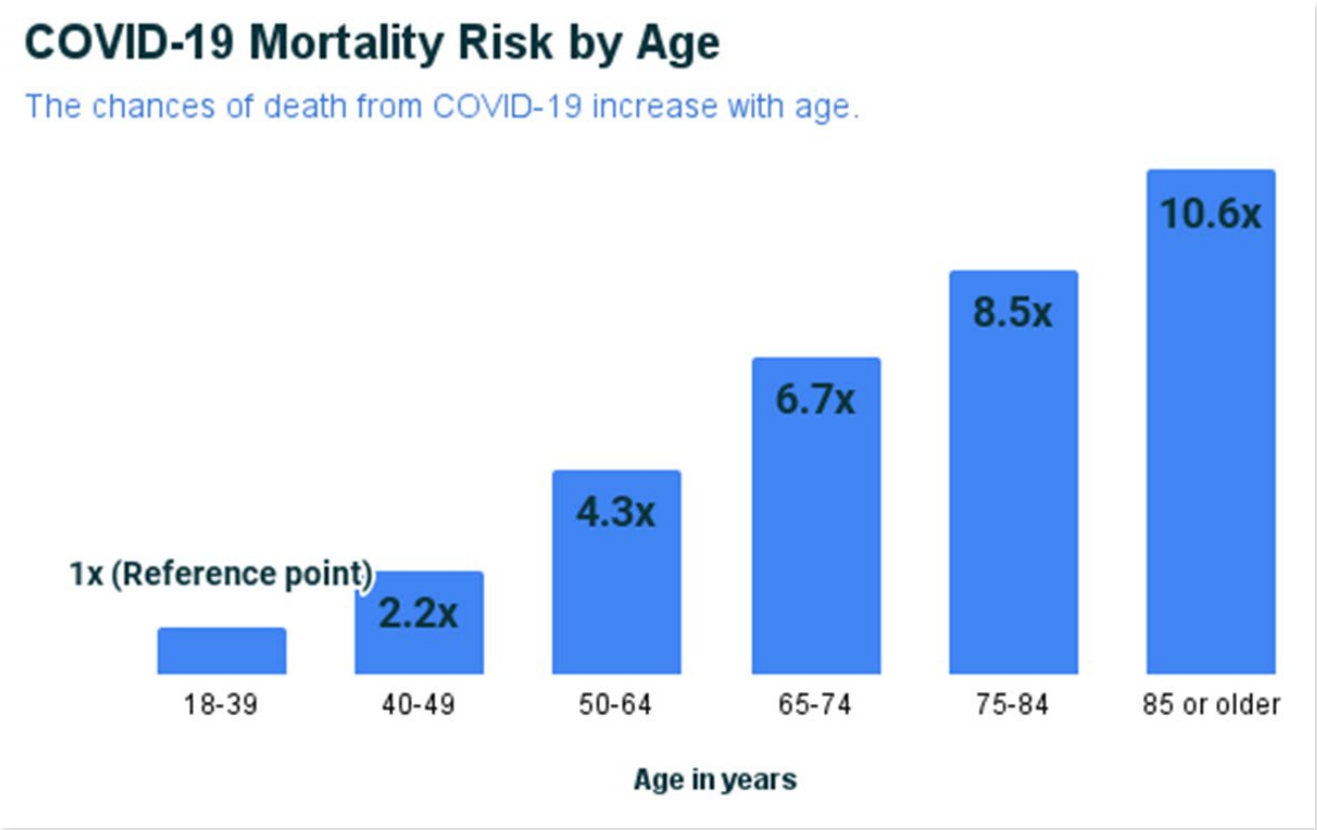
Patients with mild-to-moderate COVID-19 who are at increased risk:
older adults, unvaccinated individuals and people with underlying medical conditions, including:

- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic lung diseases limited to:
  - Interstitial lung disease
  - Pulmonary embolism
  - Pulmonary hypertension
  - Bronchopulmonary dysplasia
  - Bronchiectasis
  - COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Chronic liver diseases limited to:
  - Cirrhosis
  - Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease
  - Alcoholic liver disease
  - Autoimmune hepatitis
- Cystic fibrosis
- Diabetes mellitus, type 1 and type 2
- Disabilities
- Heart conditions (such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies)
- HIV
- Mental health disorders limited to:
  - Mood disorders, including depression
  - Schizophrenia spectrum disorders
- Obesity (BMI ≥30 kg/m2)
- Primary immunodeficiencies
- Pregnancy and recent pregnancy
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking, current and former
- Tuberculosis

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/clinical-care/underlyingconditions.html

Assessing COVID-19 Risk factors

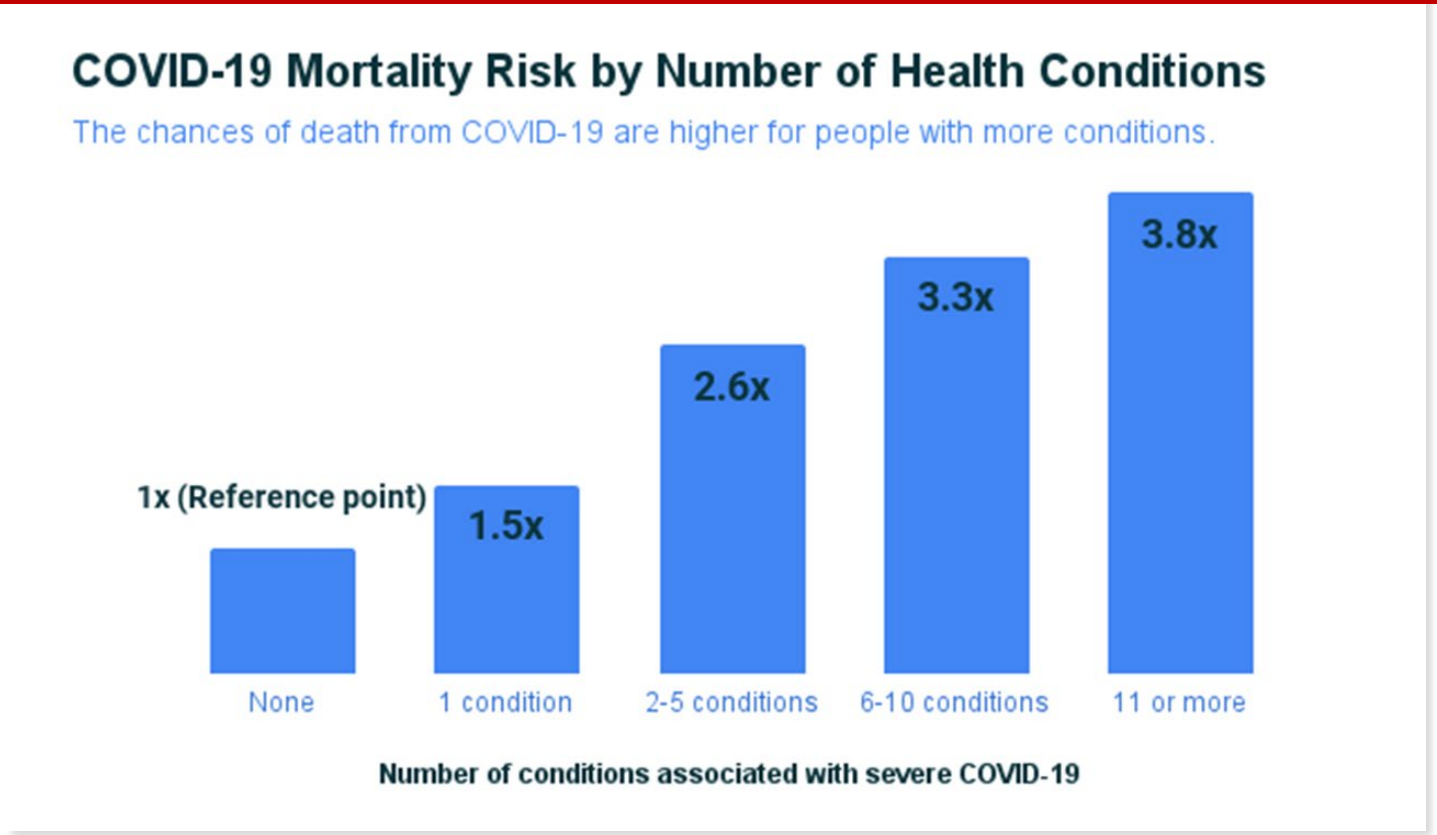
Age is the strongest risk factor for severe COVID-19 outcomes.
In 2020, people 65 or older accounted for **81%** of U.S. COVID-19 related deaths.



https://www.cdc.gov/aging/covid19/covid19-older-adults.html

COVID-19 increased Risk factors

Over 75% of Alaskans have at least one condition that puts them at higher risk, and most have **two or more conditions**, further amplifying risk.



https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

COVID-19 – Things to Know

Vaccines and booster shots are the best preventative measure available against severe disease due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 testing gives visibility on infection. Testing as soon as symptoms start provides the best opportunity for optimal treatment.

COVID-19 treatments, such as oral antivirals and monoclonal antibodies are available for individuals at risk for severe illness.

Timing is important; some antiviral drugs need to be taken within 5 days of symptom onset.

Treatments are widely available. Have a discussion with patients about risk profile.

Types of Mitigation Strategies

Outbreak Response

What is Contact Tracing?

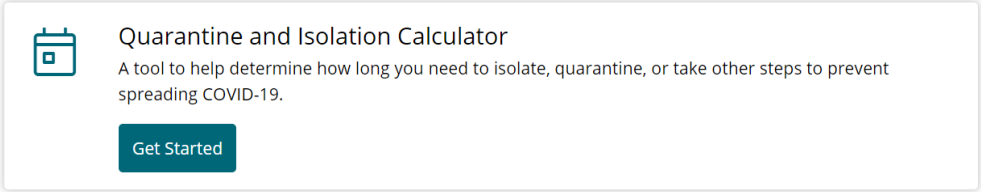
- Case Investigation - is the identification and investigation of patients with confirmed and probable diagnoses of COVID-19
- Contact Tracing - is the subsequent identification, monitoring, and support of contacts who have been exposed

- Your employees would benefit of:
  - Prompt assistance to primary cases with early treatments such as therapeutics coordination that will reduce the severity of illness
  - Early isolation and assistance with isolation challenges to decrease transmission
  - Early detection of secondary cases (close contacts)
  - Timely laboratory testing for all employees and clients (if applicable) to assist in containing an outbreak

- For more resources:

CDC's Case Investigation and Contact Tracing in Non-healthcare Workplaces: Information for Employers

CDC's Quarantine and Isolation Calculator



Contact Tracing Process

Step 1: Case Identification

Confirmed cases:

1) Routine surveillance testing reports a positive case

or

2) Employee self-reports positive results

Suspected positive case:

The employee has two consistent symptoms and a potential exposure within 14 days before the onset of symptoms.

Step 2: Contact Tracing

Case Investigation

With the employee's consent, conduct a short interview to identify possible close contacts at work. Focus on job locations, schedules, and high-risk job-related activities or interactions

Close Contacts Exposure Notification

Businesses must notify staff if one or more of their employees tests positive for COVID-19

Encourage close contacts at work to get tested

If an outbreak is identified, the business should notify the general public about temporary closure.

Isolation & Quarantine Education

Provide staff with resources on Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines

Step 3: Ongoing Monitoring

Daily medical monitoring in congregate settings, as needed

Contact Tracing is still an excellent tool during an Outbreak Response, the **C-TORT** could assist you with:

- Modified case investigation and contact tracing methods customized to your organization's needs
- Assistance with broad-based notification of potential exposure, and support testing and vaccination
- Support employers to conduct employees' positions exposure risks, COVID-19 transmission hazard evaluations, and prevention activities for your workplace
- Provide timely outbreak response support to organizations that provide essential services if they report large-scale outbreaks
- Provide technical assistance to develop mechanisms for cohorting
- Training on how to actively monitor cases according to the CDC guidance (Only applies to congregate setting such as lodging/shelter/housing)

What is Cohorting?

Cohorting is the process of grouping residents/staff based on their COVID-19 status or risk of COVID-19 during an outbreak; is a way to help prevent the spread of infection within the facility.

- C-TORT could assist with:

  - Analyzing your options for possible cohorts
  - Discussing considerations regarding the cohorts, e.g., layouts
  - Education and training your staff on personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Securing and utilizing overflow sites
  - Daily symptom screening
  - Staff Cohorting and/or Shift Staggering
  - Contingency planning for staff absences and/or shortages

Types of Mitigation Strategies

Environmental Infection Control Measures

Engineering Facilities and Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Ensure that PPE is readily available and sufficiently stocked to meet demand
- Training on proper usage, donning, and doffing of PPE.
- Understanding PPE options:
  - Different types of masks
  - Gowns
  - Gloves
  - Face shields

CDC Use and Care of Masks

Environmental Infection Control

- Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Sanitizing Protocols
- Hand washing and sanitizer stations
- Air Purification

Ventilation systems, clean filters, exhaust fans in kitchens and restrooms, open windows, and space outdoors.

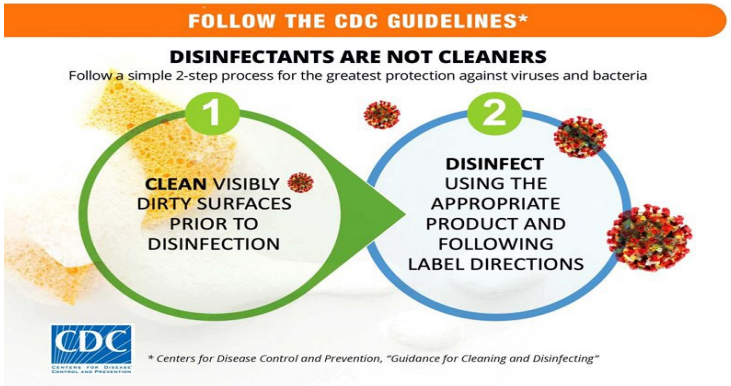
CDC Cleaning, Disinfection, & Ventilation

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

Cleaning

Removes visible dirt, germs, and impurities from surfaces

It does not kill germs but removes them and lowers their numbers and chances to infect. Typically performed using a soap/cleanser, water, and cleaning cloth



Disinfecting

This process kills germs

Disinfecting works by using an EPA registered disinfectant chemical that is designed for specific surfaces and is effective at killing 99.99% of infectious bacteria, viruses, and fungi within a set period

This period is called "Contact Time," and is the amount of time a disinfectant needs to be applied to a contaminated surface to reach that 99.99% level of efficacy

Routine Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of site (at least daily and more frequently if feasible)
- Keep cleaning logs that include the date, time, and scope of the cleaning
- Conduct frequent disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, vending machines, bathrooms)
- Clean shared spaces (e.g., conference rooms) between use and supply cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes)

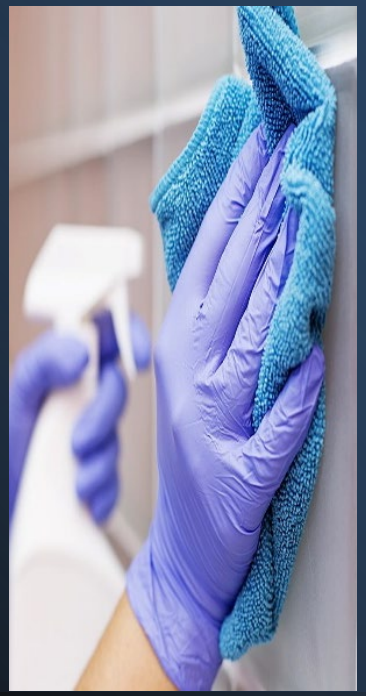
Practical tip:
If viruses are a concern at your facility, remember to disinfect – not sanitize. The main difference is that EPA-approved sanitizers only have claims for bacteria, while disinfectants have claims against both bacteria and viruses

COVID-19 tip:
When selecting a disinfectant to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, reference the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's List N a list of approved disinfectants that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19

Clean and Disinfect Your Facility When Someone Is Sick

- In the event of a positive case, shut down the site for deep cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance:

  - Increase air circulation in the area
  - Wear a mask and gloves
  - While cleaning and disinfecting for your own safety focus on the immediate areas occupied by the person
  - Vacuum the space if needed:
    - Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and bags, if available
    - While vacuuming, temporarily turn off in-room, window-mounted, or on-wall recirculation HVAC systems to avoid contamination of HVAC units
    - Do NOT deactivate central HVAC systems
  - Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfectant products, including storing such products securely and using PPE needed for the cleaning and disinfection products
  - For more information about best cleaning and disinfecting practices, visit the following link, you will also find the right products needed from the EPA List Nexternal



Support Mental Health

Communication

Educate and train employees on COVID-19 policies and procedures

- Communicate in plain language and include applicable non-English languages.
- Training should include employees, contractors, and anyone on-site.
- Include
  - Basic facts about COVID-19, spread, and prevention.
  - Workplace policies and procedures to protect workers from
  - COVID-19 hazards.

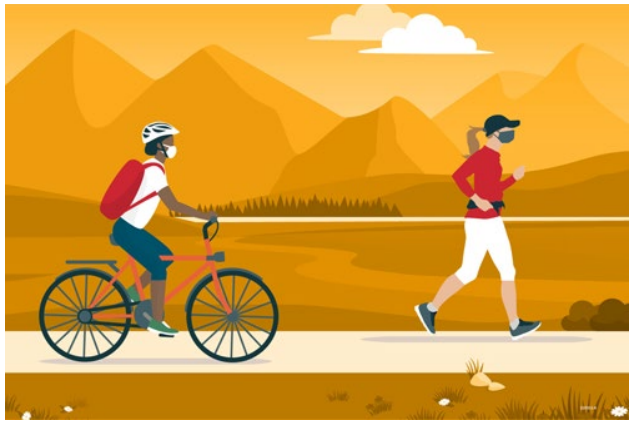
CDC Communication Resources

CDC Communication Toolkit for Migrants, Refugees, and Other Limited-English-Proficient Populations

OSHA Guidance on Protecting Workers

Build Resilience & Manage Job Stress

- Communicate about job stress
- Know the facts about COVID-19. Be informed about how to protect yourself and others
- Remind yourself that each of us has a crucial role in fighting this pandemic
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns



Questions?