

COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FOR EVERYONE

1. Is CDCN suspending services?

No. However, clients, caregivers, and the agency must work closely together to determine if and how to use services to meet clients' care needs during the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, **everyone** must follow directions from healthcare authorities as closely as possible during the provision of care.

2. Am I required to know the symptoms associated with COVID-19?

Yes. Clients and caregivers are required to know the symptoms associated with COVID-19 and to self-monitor for illness.

3. What are the symptoms associated with COVID-19?

The symptoms listed below are those most commonly associated with COVID-19. It is important to remember, however, that some people might experience only one symptom—or no symptoms at all—so everyone must be **extremely vigilant** about how they feel and with whom they interact.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Diminished sense of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Fever (measured or felt)
- Headache
- Muscle/joint aches
- Nausea
- Rigors (uncontrollable shaking)
- Runny nose
- Sore throat
- Phlegm (mucus) production

4. Are there symptoms of COVID-19 that require immediate medical attention?

Yes. If you or someone you know develops any of the following symptoms, **you should seek medical assistance immediately**:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or extreme drowsiness/inability to awaken
- Bluish lips or face

5. Does CDCN have a COVID-19 screening protocol in place?

Yes. It is mandatory that each caregiver (other than a live-in caregiver) contact his/her client **before each and every shift** to confirm that no one in either household is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If any member of a client's or a caregiver's household is experiencing symptoms, the caregiver may not report to work and must contact CDCN immediately.

6. Does CDCN require clients and caregivers to be vaccinated?

No. However, **we strongly urge everyone to follow the recommendations of healthcare authorities regarding vaccination**. If you have questions or concerns about vaccines, please speak with your primary care physician.

7. Can I receive automatic notifications about the COVID-19 situation in Alaska?

Yes. You can visit https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/AKDHSS/subscriber/new?topic_id=AKDHSS_157 to sign up for text or email alerts from the State of Alaska regarding COVID-19, vaccines, and other health matters. **We strongly urge everyone to sign up for alerts.**



8. Where can I go for information about COVID-19 and vaccines?

There are many local, state, and national resources available to provide information about COVID-19 and vaccines. Some of these include:

- Providence Nurse Advice Hotline: 1 (907) 212-6183
- Alaska Statewide Information Hotline: 2-1-1 or 1 (800) 478-2221
- State of Alaska COVID-19 Situation Page: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/default.aspx>
- State of Alaska COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/epi/id/pages/COVID-19/vaccine.aspx>
- CDC COVID-19 Homepage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>
- CDC COVID-19 Vaccine Homepage: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

FOR CLIENTS

9. What do I do if my caregiver or someone in my caregiver's household might be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

- **Do not** allow the caregiver to come to work or enter your home.
- Contact your primary care physician to discuss the situation and follow his/her advice.
- Review your CDCN *Emergency and Backup Plan*, and activate the supports you marked down, as needed.
- Make use of community supports as necessary, such as those listed under Question 8.
- Immediately notify CDCN of the situation.

10. Can CDCN provide services to me if I have been in close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) with someone who has tested positive, or is likely to test positive, for COVID-19?

In most cases, no. Due to the limitations of caregiver training, CDCN generally cannot provide services to you if you have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, or is likely to test positive, for COVID-19. However, CDCN may make an exception if you live with your caregiver or if you have substantial care needs that cannot reasonably be met without CDCN's services. Under these circumstance, the agency may provide services to you as long as you and your caregiver agree to comply with special agency directions, including, at a minimum, following CDC guidelines regarding caring for COVID-positive individuals in home settings (the agency will provide you with a copy of the CDC guidelines if an exception is being considered, or you can review them at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>). Additionally, CDCN may make an exception if you have recovered from COVID-19 within the last 3 months or if you have been fully vaccinated within the last 3 months. If you would like to be considered for an exception, you must contact CDCN.

CDCN has reached out to all clients to make sure that everyone has a backup plan in place in case of service interruption, but if you do not know what your plan is, if you think that your plan may no longer work, or if you need to change your plan, you must contact CDCN immediately.

11. If I have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, or is likely to test positive, for COVID-19, how soon after contact can I start to receive services again?

Unless you qualify for an exception (see Question 10), you will be required to wait 14 days after your last close contact with the infected (or likely infected) person before CDCN will consider allowing your services to resume. If after 14 days you are not showing any symptoms of illness, CDCN may clear you to begin receiving services again.

12. Can CDCN provide services to me if I test positive, or am likely to test positive, for COVID-19?

In most cases, no. Due to the limitations of caregiver training, CDCN generally cannot provide services to you if you test positive, or are likely to test positive, for COVID-19. However, CDCN may make an exception if you live with your caregiver **or** if you have substantial care needs that cannot reasonably be met without CDCN's services. Under these circumstance, the agency may provide services to you as long as you and your caregiver agree to comply with special agency directions, including, at a minimum, following CDC guidelines regarding caring for COVID-positive individuals in home settings (the agency will provide you with a copy of the CDC guidelines if an exception is being considered, or you can review them at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/care-for-someone.html>). If you would like to be considered for an exception, you must contact CDCN.

13. If I test positive for COVID-19, how soon after I recover can I start to receive services again?

Unless you qualify for an exception (see Question 12), CDCN will consider allowing your services to resume when:

- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared **and** at least 24 hours have passed since you last had a fever without using fever-reducing medications **and** your symptoms have improved; or
- At least 10 days have passed since your first positive test, if you remain symptom free.

14. Can I travel with my caregiver within the state to complete necessary care tasks or other approved activities?

Yes. However, you must be **extremely cautious**. This means you must:

- Avoid traveling as much as possible.
- Complete activities that require traveling as close to your home as reasonably possible.
- Have a travel request in place at least 30 days before you begin your travel, if your travel will take you away from your home community for more than 24 hours.
- Take all appropriate precautions while traveling (for example, wearing a facial covering, frequently washing or sanitizing your hands, following social distancing rules, etc.).

15. Can I travel with my caregiver out of the state for personal or medical reasons?

Yes. However, you must be **extremely cautious**. This means you must:

- Avoid traveling as much as possible.
- Have a travel request in place at least 30 days before you begin your travel.
- Take all appropriate precautions while traveling (for example, wearing a facial covering, frequently washing or sanitizing your hands, following social distancing rules, etc.).
- Follow all health mandates when you arrive at your destination (these may be very different from Alaska's recommendations or requirements).

16. If I travel out of the state for personal or medical reasons, how soon after I return to Alaska can I start to receive services again?

It depends. You will be required to complete a testing or quarantine process recommended or required by the State of Alaska when you return. If you live with your caregiver, or if you traveled with your caregiver and will receive services only from that caregiver, you will be allowed to receive services **in your home** while you complete testing or quarantine. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to receive services until your testing or quarantine has finished.

You can visit <https://covid19.alaska.gov/travelers/> find information about the State of Alaska's current testing and quarantine recommendations or requirements.

FOR CAREGIVERS

17. What do I do if my client or someone in my client's household might be experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?

- **Do not** go to work or enter your client's home.
- Urge your client to contact his/her primary care physician to discuss the situation.
- Encourage your client to review his/her CDCN *Emergency and Backup Plan* and to activate the supports marked down, as needed.
- Immediately notify CDCN of the situation.

18. What basic rules do I have to keep in mind while I'm delivering services?

- Follow agency service safety trainings, including practicing universal precautions.
- As much as possible, maintain at least six feet of separation from your client and other members of your client's household while engaged in care tasks that do not require close physical proximity or person-to-person contact.
- If at all possible, wear a facial covering, such as a cloth mask provided to you by the agency or that you have made or purchased yourself (still make sure to cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow).
- Regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or make use of an appropriate alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available), including when you first arrive to your client's home, after going to the bathroom, before eating, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your face, including your mouth, nose, or eyes.
- Make use of sanitary supplies and personal protective equipment to the greatest extent possible.
- Remind your client to routinely disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as countertops, doorknobs, and shared-use items, and assist with disinfection if you are permitted by program rules (for example, if cleaning is an approved task).
- Remind your client to ration sanitary supplies as necessary if supply chains are interrupted or slowed, or if specific items are in critically short supply.
- Follow the directions of healthcare authorities to the greatest extent possible, including state health advisories or mandates.
- Check the CDCN website regularly for updates or additional directions.

19. Does CDCN have masks, gloves, hand sanitizer, gowns, eye protection, or other personal protective equipment (PPE) available for me?

Yes. If you need PPE that is not already available in your client's home, please contact us immediately so that we can review your situation and get back to you as quickly as possible. We will do our best to provide PPE based on direction and guidance from healthcare authorities, the urgency of individual circumstances, and the supplies we have on hand. Any PPE provided by CDCN may be used **only** during the provision of services to your client.

20. Can I travel with my client within the state to complete necessary care tasks or other approved activities?

Yes. However, you must be **extremely cautious**. This means you must:

- Avoid traveling as much as possible.
- Complete activities that require traveling as close to your client's home as reasonably possible.
- Make sure that your client has a travel request in place at least 30 days before travel begins, if the travel will take your client away from his/her home community for more than 24 hours.
- Take all appropriate precautions while traveling (for example, wearing a facial covering, frequently washing or sanitizing your hands, following social distancing rules, etc.).

21. Can I travel with my client out of the state to complete necessary care tasks or other approved activities?

Yes. However, you must be **extremely cautious**. This means you must:

- Avoid traveling as much as possible.
- Make sure that your client has a travel request in place at least 30 days before the travel begins.
- Take all appropriate precautions while traveling (for example, wearing a facial covering, frequently washing or sanitizing your hands, following social distancing rules, etc.).
- Follow all health mandates when you arrive at your destination (these may be very different from Alaska's recommendations or requirements).

22. If I travel with my client out of the state, how soon after I return to Alaska can I go back to work?

It depends. You will be required to complete a testing or quarantine process recommended or required by the State of Alaska when you return. If you live with your client, or if you provide services only for the client who traveled with you, you will be allowed to provide services **in your client's home** while you complete testing or quarantine. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to provide services until your testing or quarantine has finished.

You can visit <https://covid19.alaska.gov/travelers/> find information about the State of Alaska's current testing and quarantine recommendations or requirements.

23. If I travel out of the state for personal reasons, how soon after I return to Alaska can I go back to work?

It depends. You will be required to complete a testing or quarantine process recommended or required by the State of Alaska when you return. If you live with your client, you will be allowed to provide services **in your client's home** while you complete testing or quarantine. Otherwise, you will not be allowed to provide services until your testing or quarantine has finished.

24. If I have been in close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period) with someone who has tested positive, or is likely to test positive, for COVID-19, how soon after contact can I go back to work?

You will be required to wait 14 days after your last close contact with the infected (or likely infected) person before CDCN will consider allowing you to go back to work. If after 14 days you are not showing any symptoms of illness, CDCN may clear you to begin providing services again. CDCN may make an exception if you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 3 months **or** if you have been fully vaccinated in the last 3 months. If you would like to be considered for an exception, you must contact CDCN.

25. If I test positive for COVID-19, how soon after I recover can I go back to work?

CDCN will consider allowing you to go back to work when:

- At least 10 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared **and** at least 24 hours have passed since you last had a fever without using fever-reducing medications **and** your symptoms have improved; or
- At least 10 days have passed since your first positive test, if you remain symptom free.



26. Can I continue working if I have health conditions that might make me more vulnerable to COVID-19?

Yes, if the identified risk can be reasonably mitigated (reduced). Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. If you fall into a high-risk category and are concerned that the protective measures CDCN has put into place may not work for you, you should contact the agency immediately so that we can help you review your options.

Some risk factors that might impact caregivers include those listed below:

- Asthma
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Age (especially 65 years or older)
- Compromised immune system
- Liver disease

27. If I can't work, or if I can't work my regular schedule, due to COVID-19, will I be eligible for unemployment benefits?

In most cases, yes. However, CDCN cannot say for certain. **If your work schedule has been impacted by COVID-19 (for example, if your client has reduced or eliminated your hours), you should contact the Alaska Department of Labor's Unemployment Insurance (UI) office to file a claim.** Contact information is provided below, and links to additional information have been placed on the CDCN website.

- Alaska UI office website: <https://labor.alaska.gov/unemployment/>
- Anchorage UI Claim Center: 1 (907) 269-4700
- Fairbanks UI Claim Center: 1 (907) 451-2871
- Juneau UI Claim Center: 1 (907) 465-5552
- Toll free for remote locations: 1 (888) 252-2557

28. What do I do if I have signed up for benefits through CDCN but am unable to work due to COVID-19?

Contact the agency as soon as possible so that we can help you review your options.

29. If I can't work for an extended period due to COVID-19, will I have to complete a new caregiver application before I can provide services for CDCN again?

In most cases, no. As long as your period of inactivity does not last longer than 180 days, you will not have to re-apply to return to work for the agency.

CDCN will update the information in this document as circumstances require, so please visit the agency's website regularly to check for changes.