For Our Patients: Frequently Asked Questions

Is it safe to go to Mount Sinai hospitals and doctor's offices for an appointment, procedure, or surgery?

Yes. Your safety is always our first priority. We screen all patients for symptoms of COVID-19, and if this preliminary measure is positive for you, you'll be isolated from other patients and tested for COVID-19. If you screen negative for COVID-19 symptoms, you will not be grouped with COVID-19 patients. Also, we require everyone to wear face coverings to prevent transmission of COVID-19.

How can I be kept safe from another patient with COVID-19?

To look out for everyone's well-being, we are isolating COVID-19 patients from other patients. If you have COVID-19, we will reschedule appointments until a future date when you are no longer contagious. If you have COVID-19 and need to see a doctor right away, you'll be directed away from other patients. If you do not have COVID-19, you can be assured that any other patients you may encounter while at the office have been screened for everyone's safety.

Can my doctor treat me via telemedicine?

Yes. We will continue to provide this service to our patients. You can reach our virtual service, Mount Sinai*NOW*™, at **mountsinai.org/msnow**.

What if I need to see my doctor urgently?

Please call **1-800-MD-SINAI**, and the call center can schedule you to see your doctor or direct you to an urgent care center.

Do I need to wear a mask when I go to the doctor? Will there be social distancing in the waiting room?

Yes, patients and health care workers must wear face coverings. If you don't have an appropriate face covering, we'll provide one. We are also limiting the number of patients in the waiting room and arranging the furniture to make social distancing easier. Our goal is to bring you into an exam room immediately so you do not have to wait in the waiting room.

How do I know the facilities are clean?

We have been disinfecting all areas and frequently touched surfaces since before the pandemic and will continue to do so during the pandemic.

Can I get tested for COVID-19?

If you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, you can get diagnosed through a test called the PCR. If you wish to consult a doctor about your symptoms, please use our virtual service, Mount Sinai*NOW*™, **mountsinai.org/msnow** to get guidance from a doctor on your smartphone or personal computer, using a video call, online visit, or Text-to-Chat.

Are there enough tests?

Governor of New York and the Mayor of New York City are working very hard to make sure we have enough supplies to test as many people as possible who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who were exposed to someone with COVID-19.

What COVID-19 symptoms I should look out for?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. They include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

 Or at least two of these symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

If I'm sick, how long do I have to stay home?

Patients diagnosed with COVID-19 should stay home until the following criteria are met:

- At least three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery, defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications; **and**

- Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); **and**

- At least seven days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

When and where can I get tested for antibodies?

Please schedule a video visit with your primary care doctor to discuss options, at **mountsinai.org/msnow**.

If I have antibodies, am I protected against reinfection?

It is unclear whether people who test positive for antibodies to SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes COVID-19—will be immune if they are exposed to the virus again in the future. More study is needed.

How long until the virus is out of someone's system?

If it has been confirmed that you have COVID-19, you can end home isolation once you meet these conditions:

- At least three days (72 hours) have passed since you had no fever, without using fever-reducing medications; **and**

- Cough and shortness of breath have improved; **and**

- At least seven days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.

To further reduce the risk of spreading the virus, keep wearing face coverings when around other people. And avoid prolonged, close contact with vulnerable people, such as anyone who has a compromised immune system or an underlying illness, or who is 70 or older.

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