

Information as of 4/13/20 – updated 4:30 p.m.

The fluidity of the current situation continues. As questions come up we will use this 'up-to-the-minute' FAQs sheet as a go-to forum where our team will answer, to the best of our knowledge, your questions about COVID-19 as they come in with a response for consistency and accuracy.

As always, these answers are provided through information we've gathered from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) as we understand it. Please continue to email your questions to infectioncontrol@lifesprk.com.

Q: Are there special circumstances that will allow me to visit my loved one in a senior campus?

A: The Minnesota Department of Health guidelines restricts visitors and volunteers from visiting senior campuses. However, the guidelines do make an exception for compassionate care reasons, such as end-of-life situations, which will be handled on a case-by-case basis. For Lifesprk clients whom we believe death may be imminent, we are alerting the family that they can visit with their loved one and be with them as end-of-life nears. We will work with the client's hospice team and family to determine who should visit and follow proper precautions which includes having every person screened before visiting.

Q: Is there a way to find if Lifesprk has any positive COVID19 cases in either employees or clients?

A: Yes, we have created a daily weekday hotline report which is updated by noon Monday-Friday for all clients and families as well as all Lifesprk employees on the status of any COVID-19 positive cases within Lifesprk. This is not for employee symptom checking or reporting. The hotline number is 952-873-7399 or email covid19@lifesprk.com.

Q: When should I use a cloth mask?

A: At this time, the CDC has not changed their recommendation on masks yet, however, they are looking into it. Wearing homemade masks are ok to wear in public as they do offer some protection, but it is a personal choice to do so. Alternative facemasks can serve as source control for an individual who may be infected (transmission may occur prior to the development of overt symptoms) as an approach to limit transmission of the virus. **Important reminder:** While these are great alternatives, cloth/fabric masks are not OSHA approved.

Cloth masks provide an extra layer of protection against large droplets, can be worn all day, are designed for comfort, and can be used alone. They can be used for employees to wear while running errands, out in the community (including at grocery stores, etc.) and caring for clients to prevent you from getting sick. Although cloth masks don't prevent COVID-19 transfer, they can provide an additional barrier of protection. The cloth masks also provide a great reminder to not touch our face which transmits pathogens.

It is appropriate to wear an alternative facemask:

- Over a surgical or N95 mask to extend the life of the mask.
- By asymptomatic staff who have not had exposures to known or suspect COVID-19 cases as a means of source control.
- If FDA regulated personal protective equipment (PPE) supply has been exhausted and all efforts to extend PPE use has been exhausted.

Q: How do I care for alternative facemasks/cloth masks?

A: When you use alternative facemask (including cloth masks) they should be donned and doffed per usual CDC protocol. They should be changed when saturated from condensation build up from breathing, or after a gross contamination event. Dirty and clean facemasks must be housed in separate, clearly labeled containers to prevent cross contamination and can be stored in a paper bag overnight. The cloth mask does not need to be washed daily but should be washed in between uses when it becomes dirty at 160 degrees and 25 minutes of washing machine agitation. After washing, the mask will need to be blocked or ironed.

Q: Is it safe to use sanitizer spray on the outside of the N95 mask?

A: No, it would not be safe; once the mask is wet it is no longer effective. Putting any liquid on an N95 mask could adversely affect the filtration of the mask. Instead, keep the mask in a dry paper bag after use and avoid liquids. You can use a cloth mask over the N95 to extend the life of the mask by preventing it from being soiled.

Q: Is Lifesprk providing cloth masks?

A: Yes, Lifesprk is providing 400-thread count cotton cloth woven masks that are standard surgical sizes for our employees. We are grateful for the donations that are coming from family and friends who are making masks and but we welcome additional volunteers to help us fill this need. If you need additional cloth masks, please reach out to your supervisor for their supply; they are also available at the reception desk in the main office in St. Louis Park. You will be asked to sign a waiver when receiving your mask to verify that you understand the mask is homemade and does not prevent transmission of COVID-19.

Q: What do I do if I learn my client has been exposed or confirmed to have COVID-19?

A: If your client is assumed to have COVID-19 or has confirmed COVID-19, you need to notify your supervisor if they are not already aware. When providing direct care or while working in the home or room of a person with assumed or confirmed COVID-19, do the following:

- Initiate droplet precautions (droplet precautions also include isolation & contact precautions).
- Prior to entering and exiting the unit and a resident room, perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water or applying alcohol-based handsanitizer.

Q: Can I wear a cloth mask when a client is COVID19 positive?

A: When caring for a COVID19 positive client, these masks must be used in conjunction with a surgical mask when caring for a COVID-19 + client. The cloth mask is to be used over the surgical mask/N95 mask to keep PPE clean and reusable ongoing.

Q: Why aren't staff wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) at all times on campus?

A: We are following the CDC guidelines for appropriate PPE use. While we don't discourage the use of PPE, the unnecessary use will deplete PPE resources which are already in limited supply nationally.

Q: Do we have any confirmed cases of COVID-19 – client or employee?

A: We have one confirmed case among our LEADS members, however, Lifesprk is not the provider actively directing this person's care.

Q: If my client/family members asked me about what we are doing or if they can visit their loved one, how should I respond?

A: We are practicing standard precautions, frequent cleaning, daily symptom screening of all staff. As individuals (clients or employees) with suspected symptoms are identified, we are taking the next level of precautions as recommended by the CDC to prevent further transmission to keep your loved ones safe.

For now we are asking family members, as hard as that may be for them, to not visit their loved ones on campus. As soon as this recommendation changes we will inform everyone that this restriction has lifted. Additional information can be found online from the [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#).

Q: How does COVID-19 spread?

A: The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html>.

[Check SharePoint](#) for two additional handouts regarding how COVID-19 spreads: ‘stop the spread of germs’ and ‘2019 NCOV fact sheet.’

Q: What should I report to my supervisor related to my travel or health status?

A: Employees must complete the below assessment daily. If you answer YES to any of these questions, contact your supervisor.

Please report to your supervisor whether you are symptomatic, or not, before the start of each shift:

1. Do you have any of the following symptoms?
 - a. Cough
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. New shortness of breath

**If one symptom is present, you must take your temperature and report the result.*

2. Do you have a fever? If yes, you must report your temperature to your supervisor immediately.
3. Within the past 14 days, have you been exposed to COVID-19? This includes close contact with a person who is confirmed to have or assumed to have COVID-19. (Close contact is defined as being within 6 feet of the person). YES or NO
4. Have you recently traveled to or been in contact with a person returning from an area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19?
 - a. China
 - b. Iran
 - c. Most European countries

- d. United Kingdom and Ireland
- e. Australia
- f. Canada
- g. Brazil
- h. Japan
- i. Israel
- j. Malaysia
- k. South Korea

Refer to the [CDC Coronavirus webpage](#) for up-to-date COVID-19 areas.

Q: What should I do if I have respiratory symptoms?

A: Contact your supervisor immediately. They will do a screening and work with you to reschedule your shift/visits.

Additionally, [CDC guidelines recommends](#) that ‘call ahead before visiting your doctor.’ If you have respiratory symptoms (ie: dry or productive cough, shortness of breath) and fever, and you are considering going to the emergency room, urgent care clinic or your primary care clinic, it is urged that you please call first. As healthcare agencies are working round-the-clock to minimize and contain the spread of COVID-19, instead of coming into their offices, call ahead and they will provide screening and health recommendation for you.

Please also check with your health insurance provider as many of them are now waiving any co-pays for telehealth appointments.

Q: If my client cancels services, will I be paid for the visit?

A: *Non-Exempt/Hourly/PPV Team Members:* If the client does not give 24-hour notice of the cancelation, you will be paid for the first canceled visit/shift, but not any subsequent visits/shifts (if the client cancels for an extended period of time). We will work to reschedule you with open clients in your area so you can maintain your desired number of hours/visit per week.

We are also working to increase the number of clients we are serving at home to help with the high demand on hospitals, skilled nursing, and senior living campuses during this crisis.

Exempt/Salaried Team Members: You will be paid as normal, as long as you are available and reporting for work.

Q: If I am asked to stay home from work because I have been potentially exposed, will I be paid?

A: You will need to take PTO. For the duration of the pandemic, we will allow all full-time employees (working >= 30 hours per week) to carry a negative PTO balance of up to 40 hours under the circumstances listed below. Any PTO accrued going forward would ‘pay back’ the borrowed PTO. Employees must document emergency sick leave in UltiPro PTO request in the notes section using one of the following options:

1. Self-isolation or hospitalization due to diagnosis of a contagious respiratory illness (Influenza A, COVID-19, etc.)
2. Care for family member with a diagnosis of a contagious respiratory illness (Influenza A, COVID-19, etc.)

Any PTO accrued going forward would ‘pay back’ the borrowed PTO. There may be relief from the government that would reimburse your PTO bank for time taken as a result of COVID-19. We will update this FAQ as more

details become available. Please let workforce know if you have any questions by contacting Sarah Beatty at 952-345-8770 or sbeatty@lifesprk.com.

Q: When do I contact someone regarding workmen's compensation?

A: If you believe you were exposed at work to COVID-19 you will need to fill out a claim packet. Insurance adjusters will determine whether the claim is covered. After you complete the paperwork, adjusters will be in contact with you directly. Exposure alone is not considered an 'injury or illness' but it will document the date and circumstance of exposure. Please reach out to Workforce for workmen's compensation packet information.

Q: If I stay home to care for my child due to school or childcare center closure or a family member due to exposure, will I be paid?

A: For school closures, no, you will need to utilize PTO to be paid for time off. As a reminder, public schools remain open to children whose parents are healthcare workers. If your child's school requires documentation of your employment with Lifesprk, please contact Mary Susan Timion.

For up-to-date information and resources related to work interruptions related to COVID-19 and government benefits that may be available, please refer to: <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/workers/>.

DEED's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program assists workers who can't work, have their hours reduced or lose their jobs as a result of the pandemic. The UI program is prepared and ready to assist these workers. If you are unemployed or have your hours reduced, you may apply for unemployment benefits by visiting www.uimn.org.

Q: How do I get PPE (protective personal equipment)?

A: Contact your supervisor to determine who needs PPE and whether they can be dropped off or delivered right to you. As a company, Lifesprk will make sure that every employee who needs PPE will get the equipment they need quickly. For additional PPE support and questions, please reach out to any nurse on the Infection Control team:

- Paulette Duncan, RN, Director of Quality and Compliance: 763-439-9963
- Shannon Podewils, RN, Infection Control Officer, Director/Administrator, Home Health: 952- 334-1330
- Cathy Luring, APRN CNP, VP, Lifesprk Health: 952-228-4820
- Sarah Johnson, APRN CNP, Manager of Health Services: 952-240-4944
- Mary Susan Timion, RN, Director, Workforce: 612-998-2549
- Dawn Heuer RN, PTA, Clinical Manager- Home Health: 612-210-1395

Q: What do I do if a facility my client is in won't let me see them?

A: Contact your supervisor. [You are considered 'essential' healthcare workers.](#)

Supervisors: We recommend reaching out to the facility to understand their specific policy. Communicate with the family and determine if you want to appeal to the facility or honor their request to not deliver care during this period.