What is COVID-19?
COVID-19, an illness caused by a newly identified type of coronavirus, can cause a respiratory infection and lead to health problems. It’s usually mild and most people recover quickly if they have it, but it can be very serious for people with stressed immune systems or underlying conditions or older adults, so it’s important to stay informed. COVID-19 is spread from person-to-person by coughing or sneezing and getting exposed to droplets that have the virus in them.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
The main symptoms feel like the flu or a really bad cold:
- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Loss of sense of smell

Who is at increased risk?
- People 60 years old and older
- People with certain medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, kidney disease and weakened immune systems

Prevention
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer—it must have at least 60% alcohol in it—can also kill the virus.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough and sneeze with a tissue and throw it away in a lined trash can, or if you don’t have a tissue, cough into the bend in your elbow. Wash hands with soap and water afterwards.
- Give a mask to anyone who is coughing and ask them to wear it.
- Use alternates to handshakes and hugs, such as elbow bumps, etc.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Wash your hands before you put on gloves and after you take them off.
- Stay six feet from people, if you are getting closer than 6 feet, you will need additional personal protective equipment.
- Get a flu shot. It won’t prevent COVID-19 but it will prevent the flu and keep you out of clinics, pharmacies, or emergency departments and minimize your risk of contact with others who may be sick.

Encampments (CDC Guidelines)
- Unless individual housing units are available, do not clear encampments during community spread of COVID-19. Clearing encampments can cause people to disperse throughout the community and break connections with service providers. This increases the potential for infectious disease spread.
- Encourage people staying in encampments to set up their tents/sleeping quarters with at least 12 feet x 12 feet of space per individual.
- Ensure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day.
- If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide information on locations of portable latrines with handwashing facilities.
Engagement

- Pause at a distance of at least 6 feet from others.
- Before entering the camp, offer supplies including sanitizers for the camp.
- If permission is granted to enter the camp, explain that you are wearing masks and will be wearing gloves, and other personal protective equipment when within 6 feet of others to protect people sleeping at the camp from contracting COVID-19 while providing services.
- Ask if there are any general or medical issues the group would like help with, and then proceed to explain that one of your concerns for the people served is their risk of the recent COVID19 pandemic. Frame the visit in terms of concern for the people in the camp and the desire to engage them in solidarity with their own self-care.
  - If there are medical concerns, call the Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless Street Medicine Team at 505-414-0653 and provide details of the client and their location for street medicine follow up.
- Provide information about COVID-19 and go over COVID-19 Guidance for People Living on the Street document with residents.
- Take time to listen to their opinions and desires to establish a shared commitment to addressing the issues they identify.
- Make every effort to approach and interact with rough sleepers in a trauma-informed way that minimizes stigma and promotes trust and emotional safety. Street medicine teams are reporting from a variety of U.S. locations that rough sleepers are being increasingly stigmatized during the COVID19 pandemic.

Supplies

- Consider bringing supplies to improve sanitation at camps:
  - sanitizing wipes
  - hand sanitizer
  - bucket and soap cleansing stations
  - toilet paper, paper towels, etc.

Medical Services

Call 911 if someone is having a medical emergency like chest pain, gasping for breath, unconscious, or cannot get up.

If someone needs medical evaluation for COVID-19 symptoms or health care at their encampment, call the Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless Street Medicine phone line: 505-414-0653 and provide details of the client and their location for street medicine follow up.

24/7 Hotlines

DOH COVID-19 Hotline 855-600-3453

New Mexico Crisis Hotline 855-662-7474