

COVID-19 and Research Participation

The University of Minnesota and the research team are committed to your care and safety. This document provides you with important information about COVID-19, ways your choice to participate in research might change, and information to help you decide whether research participation is right for you at this time.

It is important to know that research participation may include increased travel outside of your home and exposure to others that may increase your exposure to COVID-19. **You do not have to participate in research now or at any time if you do not feel comfortable doing so. Research participation is always voluntary; you may stop participation at any time.**

What are researchers doing to minimize your risks?

Researchers will screen participants for symptoms and for contact with people that have or had COVID-19. They will also minimize the number of in-person research visits and appropriately disinfect research visit spaces before and after use.

Researchers have been asked to follow all University of Minnesota COVID-19 safety guidelines, which include:

- Properly wash their hands
- Maintain physical distance
- Wear a face covering (mask)
- Check their temperature each morning and evening
- Tell their supervisor or human resources representative if they have a fever or any COVID-19 symptoms
- Stay home if they feel sick

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness in people caused by a new virus that can be spread:

- From person to person, such as when an infected person coughs or sneezes
- By touching a surface or object (such as a doorknob or counter surface) that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes
- When people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet), especially indoors
- By some people without symptoms

Can COVID-19 be prevented?

There currently is no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 and the following is important for everyone:

- Wash your hands often
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wear a mask when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Monitor your own health for COVID-19 symptoms

If you decide to attend in-person research visits, you will be asked to do these things. You will also be asked questions to screen for symptoms before you arrive and to limit additional people who will attend the research appointment with you.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported, ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Seek medical care right away if you have symptoms and feel worse or you have difficulty breathing. Even if you have mild symptoms, call the study team before coming to a study visit.

Who is most at risk of harm from COVID-19?

Older adults are at a higher risk for more severe illness and death, especially those over the age of 65.

People of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at a higher risk for more severe illness and death, including those people with:

- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease

People who are immunocompromised from cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications are also at elevated risk.

Where can I learn more information?

Visit:

- z.umn.edu/COVID19info
- www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus

Who can I call if I have concerns?

To privately ask questions, share concerns, or offer complaints about your research experience, contact the University of Minnesota Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) Advocate Line at 612-625-1650 (Toll Free: 1-888-224-8636) or go to z.umn.edu/participants