2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
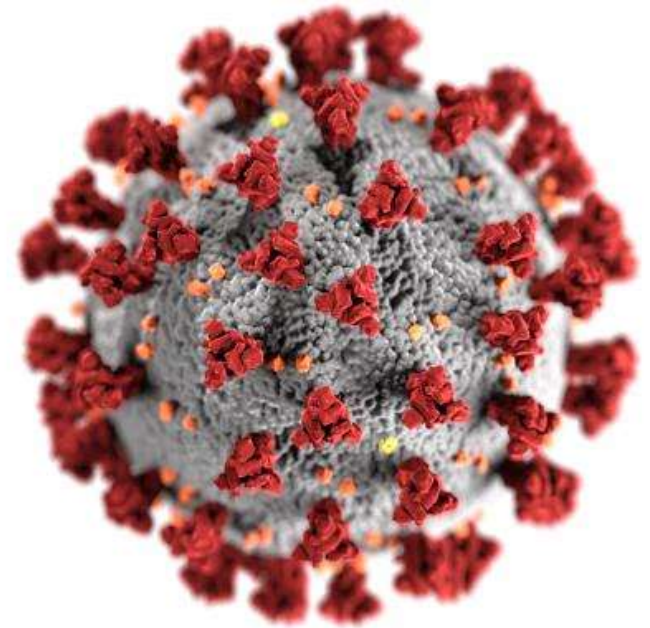
Elections and Voting

Presented by the South Dakota Department of Health
September 2, 2020

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This is an **emerging, rapidly evolving situation**. Information in this presentation is current as of September 1, 2020. Please check the South Dakota Department of Health website for the most current information and guidance.

COVID.sd.gov

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Agenda

❖ Symptoms of COVID-19

❖ How COVID-19 spreads

❖ Positive case – what happens?

❖ Behaviors to reduce spread

❖ Masks and face shields

❖ Wearing and removing masks

❖ Cleaning and disinfecting

❖ Maintaining health environments

❖ Voting in long term care facilities

❖ Educate voters

❖ Resources

❖ Questions?

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Symptoms of COVID-19

❖ People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reports – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness.

❖ Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

❖ Symptoms include:

    ✓ Fever or chills

    ✓ Cough

    ✓ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

    ✓ Fatigue

    ✓ Muscle or body aches

    ✓ Headache

    ✓ New loss of taste or smell

    ✓ Congestion or runny nose

    ✓ Nausea or vomiting

    ✓ Diarrhea

❖ CDC continues to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19.

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How COVID-19 Spreads

❖ COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
   ✓ Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet)
   ✓ Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks; these droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly inhaled into the lungs

❖ It is possible to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or possibly eyes.
   ✓ This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how the virus spreads

❖ Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus.

❖ In general, the more closely a person interacts (< 6 ft.) with others and the longer that interaction (> 15 minutes), the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

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Positive Case – What Happens

Case Investigation

- ❖ Disease Intervention Specialists (DIS) reach out to patient who has tested positive for COVID-19 to obtain information:
  - ✓ Date symptoms began
    - ○ Did patient work in a polling location
  - ✓ Names of close contacts for contact tracing

- ❖ DIS educate patient on isolating themselves from household members and other close contacts

- ❖ DIS discuss criteria a patient needs to meet to come off of isolation
  - ✓ Fever-free for 24 hours w/o use of medication AND
  - ✓ Improvement in symptoms AND
  - ✓ At least 10 days have passed since symptoms began
  - ✓ For asymptomatic patients, isolation period is for 10 days following a positive specimen being collected

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Positive Case – What Happens

Contact Tracing

❖ DIS also do contact tracing when conducting an investigation.

❖ Contact tracing is defined as identifying a patient's close contacts and asking them to quarantine for 14 days after their last date of exposure to the original patient and to monitor themselves for symptoms.
  ✓ A close contact is defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset (or for asymptomatic individuals, 48 hours prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated. Type of interaction may also be a factor (e.g., coughing) in determining level of exposure.

❖ DIS notify the close contacts of their exposure and educate them on effectively and safely quarantining to prevent additional transmission of COVID-19.

❖ DIS may need to reach out to a business to receive a list of close work contacts of the original patient.
  ✓ If patient is unable to identify close contacts at all locations a Public Health Notice may be issued

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Behaviors to Reduce Spread

❖ Stay home when sick or after recent close contact with a COVID-19 positive person
  ✓ Screen for symptoms before starting work and be alert if symptoms develop during the day
  ✓ Ensure adequate staffing to cover any workers who must stay home or who develop symptoms during day

❖ Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  ✓ Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after being in a public place, or after blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
  ✓ If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
  ✓ Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands
  ✓ Cover coughs and sneezes with tissue or use inside of elbow

❖ Recommend and reinforce the use of masks among all poll workers
  ✓ Masks are most essential when physical distancing is difficult
  ✓ Masks can make it more difficult for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to lip-read, hear or understand what is being said – support with written communications, information/instructions

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Behaviors to Reduce Spread

❖ Social distancing
  ✓ Reminders for voters to maintain 6-feet while waiting to vote; provide signs, visual cues on floor, etc.
  ✓ Have plans to manage lines to ensure social distancing can be maintained
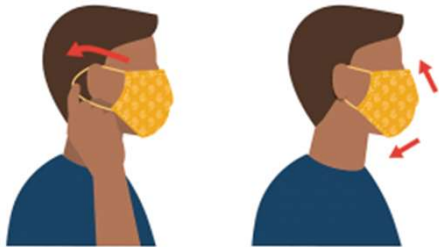 ✓ Discourage voters and workers from greeting others with physical contact (e.g., handshakes)

❖ Adequate supplies
  ✓ Have adequate soap, hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), disinfecting wipes, no-touch trash cans, etc.
  ✓ Have hand sanitizer at each step in the voting process – registration, voting booths/machines, where "I Voted" stickers are handed out, and exits
  ✓ Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may not be compatible with electronic voting equipment and may damage paper ballots – *poll workers and voters should ensure hands are **completely dry** before handing these items.*

❖ Post signs and messaging – stopping the spread of germs, masking, social distancing, etc.

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Masks and Face Shields

❖ You can spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.

❖ Masks are meant to protect other people in case you are infected.

❖ If you need to take you mask off for a short period of time, fold it so its inner surface goes inward and against itself

❖ While wearing a mask will contain your respiratory droplets, a face shield may provide additional protection when not able to maintain a 6-foot distance or when in close contact with someone who is not wearing a mask.
   ✓ Face shields can be reused and are easily cleaned with soap and water, or common household disinfectants.

❖ Masks and face shields are not a substitute for social distancing.

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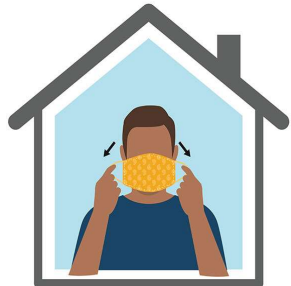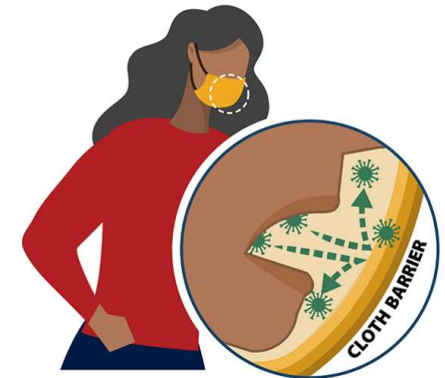
Wearing and Removing a Mask

Wear Your Mask Correctly
- ✓ Wash your hands before putting on your mask
- ✓ Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- ✓ Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- ✓ Make sure you can breathe easily

Wear a Mask to Protect Others
- ✓ Wear a mask in a public setting, especially when it may be difficult to stay 6 feet apart
- ✓ Don't put the mask around your neck or up on your forehead
- ✓ Don't touch the mask, and if you do, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer

Take Off Mask Carefully
- ✓ Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- ✓ Handles only by the ear loops
- ✓ Fold outside corners together
- ✓ Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing

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Cleaning and Disinfecting

❖ ***Cleaning*** with soap and water removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces and lowers the risk of spreading infection. ***Disinfecting*** kills germs on surfaces; by killing germs on surfaces after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Clean surfaces and objects prior to disinfection. When finished, remember to wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

❖ Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, registration tables, pens, clipboards, etc., should be disinfected frequently.
  ✓ Shared objects (e.g., pens, ballot activation cards, ballot secrecy sleeves, etc.) should be replaced with single-use objects (where possible) or disinfected between ***each*** user.

❖ Clean and disinfect voting-associated equipment (e.g., machines, tablets, keyboards, etc.) routinely
  ✓ Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics or disposable voting sleeves
  ✓ Clean and disinfect all equipment/transport cases prior to returning it to election office

❖ After polling location closes, clean and disinfect all facility items/areas such as tables, chairs, door handles, and restrooms used by poll workers or voters
  ✓ Facility can be returned to normal use immediately with no additional precautions

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Maintaining Healthy Environments

❖ Increase ventilation
- ✓ Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible – open windows and doors (weather permitting)

❖ Minimize waiting lines
- ✓ Use floor markings and signs to remind voters to maintain 6-feet while in line
- ✓ Limit number of voters in the facility by moving waiting lines outdoors (weather permitting)

❖ Modifies layouts and procedures
- ✓ Increase space between voting booths
- ✓ Consider using larger facilities or increasing number of polling locations to minimize crowds
- ✓ Ensure voters move in one directions while voting such as single doors for entry and exit

❖ Use physical barriers
- ✓ Utilize plexiglass barriers to protect workers and voters when physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., registration desks)

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Voting in Long Term Care Facilities

❖ Visitation restrictions will likely continue to be in place

❖ In-person voting at facility (late September/early October)
  ✓ Voting would likely have to occur outside (weather permitting)
  ✓ Masking and other protective measures would be required as determined by the facility
  ✓ Identify back-up plan

❖ Identify a facility "authorized messenger" to facilitate voting by residents
  ✓ Photo id or notarization requirement *cannot* be waived
  ✓ Availability of notary will vary from facility to facility

❖ Reach out early to administrators of facilities to accommodate voting for residents

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Educate Voters

❖ Practice healthy behaviors – handwashing/hand sanitizer, covering coughs/sneezes, social distancing, masking

❖ Bring your own blue or black pen

❖ Vote at off-peak times or consider voting alternatives that minimize contact (e.g., early voting)

❖ If using hand sanitizer, before touching voting equipment or paper ballot make sure hands are completely dry to avoid damage to equipment or ballot
  ✓ Wash hands or use hand sanitizer *after* voting

❖ Be prepared
  ✓ Check voting location/requirements and verify voter registration information in advance of reporting to polling location
  ✓ Review/complete sample ballot at home to speed the process of voting

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Resources

- ❖ COVID-19 in South Dakota
  - ✓ covid.sd.gov

- ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - ✓ General Information – https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/

  - ✓ Considerations for Election Polling Locations and Voters – https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/election-polling-locations.html

  - ✓ Communication Resources – https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html

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QUESTIONS????

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