

Q: Should my organization be screening for COVID-19?



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A: It depends on the setting.

Definition of Screening

Symptom-based screening looks for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

This generally includes:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (may be subjective)*

Symptoms that may also occur are:

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

***Definition of fever can be slightly different between recommendations.**

Laboratory testing of asymptomatic people may also be considered for certain settings.

- PCR testing may be considered if the facility has the capability and capacity to do so.
- **Antibody testing is not recommended** as a screening for acute illness per CDC.

Settings where laboratory testing may be helpful for sentinel surveillance and to prevent introduction into a facility:

- Elective medical procedures
- Intake of residents/clients into a care facility or congregate housing or correctional setting

The type of screening recommended by CDC and regulatory bodies vary slightly. For example, some recommend temperature checks with symptoms screening, and some do not. Refer to the list below for the recommendations on types of screenings based on setting.

Setting Screening Recommendations

Dental (**CDC Recommendations**)

- Screen all dental employees for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 at the beginning of their shift
- Screen patients prior to arrival for fever and symptoms of COVID-19.

Healthcare Facilities (**CDC Recommendations**)

- Screen patients and visitors for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival, triage and isolate those who are symptomatic.
- Screen healthcare workers at the beginning of their shift for fever (100.0 F) and symptoms of COVID-19

Long Term Care/Assisted Living Facilities (**CDC Recommendations**)

- Screen patients and visitors for fever and symptoms of COVID-19 upon arrival, triage and isolate those who are symptomatic.
- Screen LTC workers at the beginning of their shift for fever (100.0 F) and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Actively monitor residents at least daily for fever (100.0 F or greater) and symptoms of COVID-19.

Meat and Poultry Processing (**CDC Recommendations**)

- Consider providing screening of workers prior to shift including symptoms of COVID-19 and temperature checks (fever greater than or equal to 100.4 F)

Setting Screening Recommendations

Veterinary Staff (CDC Recommendations)

- Screen veterinary staff at the beginning of shifts prior to interacting with staff and clients.

Schools/Daycares/Colleges/Universities (CDC Recommendations)

- Per CDC, these facilities are not expected to screen students or staff to identify cases of COVID-19.
- **Governor Bullock's directive** encourages schools to implement temperature checks and/or symptom screening when practical.

Correctional Facilities (CDC Recommendations)

- The guidance recommends verbal screening and temperature checks for incarcerated/detained persons, staff, volunteers, and visitors who enter correctional and detention facilities, as well as incarcerated/detained persons who are transferred to another facility or released from custody.
- See the link for the verbal screening script.

Retirement Communities (CDC Recommendations)

- Screen, when possible, workers and essential volunteers who will be interacting with residents for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- This includes actively taking each person's temperature using a no-touch thermometer, and asking whether or not the person is experiencing shortness of breath or has a cough.

Critical Infrastructure Workers (CDC Recommendations)

- Employers should measure the employee's temperature and assess symptoms prior to them starting work.
- Ideally, temperature checks should happen before the individual enters the facility prior to the start of the individual's shift.

Congregate Housing (CDC Recommendations)

- See link, screening largely recommended for homeless shelters.

My organization doesn't fit into these settings...

All organizations should follow social distancing and mask use guidelines and directives.

CDC has made recommendations for **businesses and workplaces** to:

- reduce transmission among employees
- maintain healthy business operations
- maintain a healthy work environment.

Cloth face covering guidance is also available from CDC.

Review restrictions outlined in **Governor Bullock's 4/22/2020 directive** on reopening.

We would still like to perform screenings. What plans should we put into place?

- Individuals performing screenings should be trained in the use of thermometers and symptom screening forms
- If taking temperatures, please use thermometers intended for that purpose.
- Identify actions to take when symptomatic individuals are identified, such as referral to a primary care provider and exclusion from the setting.
- Contact your **local health department** with questions on this subject.