**Protecting Your Event from the Coronavirus**

The Michigan Democratic Party is committed to doing all we can to minimize the risk of the spread of coronavirus at party events throughout the year.

Below, we outline what the coronavirus is, how to protect yourself, how to protect your event, and where to go for additional information.

**What is the coronavirus?**

According to the [Center for Disease Control](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html), COVID-19 is a viral respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus that has not been found in people before. Patients with confirmed COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

* fever
* cough
* shortness of breath
* Some patients have had other symptoms including muscle aches, headache, sore throat, or diarrhea.
* Based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of other coronaviruses, CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear two to 14 days after exposure.
* Symptoms are similar to other respiratory illnesses that are circulating, such as influenza, so experiencing these symptoms alone does not necessarily mean you need to be tested for COVID-19.

**How to protect yourself**

[Below are some basic recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html) (CDC) on how to protect yourself from coronavirus.

* Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
* Stay home when you are sick.
* Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
* Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
* Follow CDC’s recommendations for using a facemask.
  + CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
  + Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to  others.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

[The World Health Organization (WHO) has some useful advice](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public) on protecting yourself as well, which we recommend reading.

**How to protect your event**

Here are a few steps you can take to help reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission at party events. **Please note that Governor Whitmer advises cancellation of gatherings of more than 100 people.**

* Send an email to attendees before the event, and make an announcement in person at the start of the event, encouraging them to:
  + stay home/go home if sick
  + avoid shaking hands
  + wash their hands regularly
  + sneeze into an arm or a tissue
  + avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
* Have plenty of hand sanitizer, garbage cans, and tissues nearby.
* Try to seat people at least 3 feet apart if possible.
* Put up posters and flyers reminding people how to protect themselves from coronavirus. Both the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf) and [WHO](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/inaugural-who-partners-forum/coronavirus-poster-english-srilanka.pdf?sfvrsn=289dedc3_0) have flyers that you can use for these purposes.
* Try to clean and disinfect commonly used surfaces before and after your event.
* Retain the names and contact details of all participants for at least one month. This will help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event.

[The CDC has put together some recommendations for event organizers](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fmass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html), which is a useful resource as we enter election season.

We also encourage party leaders to continue sharing advice on coronavirus-proofing your events with one another. If you’ve had your event, let folks know what worked and what didn’t. If your event is coming up and you’ve got questions, ask your fellow democratic leaders.

**Additional resources**

If you choose to cancel your in-person meetings or events, your group may want to consider conducting them online or telephonically.

FreeConferenceCall.com offers free conference lines for up to 1,000 people. <https://www.freeconferencecall.com/>

Zoom Conference offers free video conference rooms for up to 100 people with the option to include a PowerPoint. <https://zoom.us/>

[Johns Hopkins University is tracking the spread of coronavirus live](https://gisanddata.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6). While they cannot track cases that have yet to be diagnosed and reported, this is still a useful tool for determining whether coronavirus has been confirmed in your community.

There’s some misinformation about coronavirus circulating. We recommend taking a moment to [review the WHO’s myth-busters](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters) to set the record straight about what coronavirus is.

The Red Cross has a really useful [one page fact sheet](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/get-help/COVID-19%20Checklist%20v6%2003062020%20FINAL.pdf) with important information on coronavirus.