

HEALTH AND NUTRITION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Vaccination, Testing, Procedures, and Medical Supplies

Q: Does Hawaii have a vaccination plan?

A: State and county officials in Hawaii are preparing a state plan to implement a COVID-19 vaccination program. More information on the state's mass vaccination plan can be found [here](#).

Q: Is the COVID-19 vaccine free?

A: Yes, the COVID-19 vaccines and their administration are free for all individuals, regardless of insurance coverage.

Q: Where can I find data about the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in Hawaii?

A: The Department of Health maintains a [website](#) that provides the most up-to-date information on the number of cases and tests conducted.

Q: How can I get access to a COVID-19 test? What will it cost?

A: If you have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please contact your doctor to see if you should be tested.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act requires health insurers to cover medically necessary COVID-19 diagnostic tests at no cost to individuals, as well as the doctor's visit associated with the test. This includes private health plans, Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Med-QUEST, CHIP, TRICARE, veterans' plans, federal workers' health plans, and the Indian Health Service.

Q: If I have COVID-19, will my treatment be covered?

A: If you have insurance, your treatment for COVID-19 should be covered. However, you may be responsible for a portion of these costs through cost-sharing, such as deductibles and co-pays. Some insurers are waiving cost-sharing for COVID-19 treatment, so you may want to consult with your insurance company on payment options.

If you are uninsured, the federal government is reimbursing health care providers for the cost of providing treatment to uninsured patients with COVID-19. Health care providers should submit claims for uninsured patients to the federal government instead of charging the patients. More information is available [here](#).

If you are worried about the cost of treatment, please call 211 for information on government support or other options that may be available to you.

Q: What is contact tracing?

A: Contact tracing is the process of identifying, locating, and monitoring contacts of individuals with COVID-19. Contact tracing is done by trained Hawaii Department of Health employees and volunteers. These officials will work on a case by case basis to contact anyone who may have recently been in close contact with a COVID-19 positive person. A contact tracer will never ask you for your social security number or any financial information. More information on contact tracing efforts in Hawaii can be found [here](#).

Q: What should I do if contacted by the Department of Health as part of a contact tracing investigation?

A: Please cooperate. The Hawaii Department of Health contact tracers protect the community from the spread of COVID-19 by identifying, quarantining, and monitoring persons who have had close contact with a person with COVID-19.

Q: Is there support available for those in quarantine or during recovery?

A: The state and county governments have been working together to help develop options for people who either have COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19, so they can have meals delivered, or even have a place to self-isolate from others. Step-by-step instructions on how to isolate or quarantine safely can be found [here](#), and if you need help, contact Hawai'i CARES for additional information and support at 1-800-753-6879, or text ALOHA to 741741.

Q: What can I do to stay healthy?

A: The State of Hawaii has guidance on steps you can take to protect yourself [here](#). Making this guidance part of your daily routine helps to keep you and the people around you healthy. Please remember to wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance.

Q: What should I do if I start to feel sick?

A: If you think you might have COVID-19, or you have symptoms like a fever, cough, and shortness of breath, check out the CDC guidelines [here](#) for guidance on how to take care of yourself, and when to get medical help. If you are worried about the cost of seeing a doctor or getting treatment please call 211 for information on government support or other options that may be available to you.

Q: Are individuals able to access home test kits for COVID-19?

A: The Food and Drug Administration has granted Emergency Use Authorization to several companies offering COVID-19 test kits with home sample collection. Some of the approved tests allow patients to administer a self-swab and then mail in their sample for testing.

Q: Are there any options besides N-95 masks for health care workers?

A: Yes. On April 3, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued an Emergency Use Authorization that makes certain respirators eligible for use if specific criteria are met. The FDA has an updated list of authorized and imported N-95, KN-95, and other respirators from China, which is available [here](#). The FDA also issued [guidance](#) to provide a policy to help expand the availability of general use face masks for the general public and respirators for healthcare professionals during this pandemic. In addition, the FDA released a guide for health care providers and facilities for selecting respirators. You may read this guide [here](#).

Q: Are there any options for reusing N-95 masks?

A: Yes. If you are a health care organization looking to reuse N-95 masks, Hawaii has a Battelle decontamination system that can decontaminate thousands of N-95 respirators using concentrated, vapor phase hydrogen peroxide. Please click [here](#) for more information and specifics on using the Battelle decontamination system.

Q: Does Hawaii have enough PPE, and will President Trump invoke the Defense Production Act to ensure this?

A: Hawaii has received multiple shipments of PPE from the Strategic National Stockpile, which is our nation's supply of life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, and health care providers continue to purchase supplies through normal commercial channels. The Governor

and other state officials will continue to make every effort to secure the PPE needed by our health providers and other frontline workers. President Trump has taken a few steps under the Defense Production Act to provide more PPE, but much more can and should be done to increase supplies nationwide.

The State of Hawaii has recently launched a website for qualified entities to order PPE. The website is available [here](#).

Q: What kind of face covering should the general public be wearing and where can I get one?

A: In accordance with the Hawaii Department of Health's [guidance](#) on face masks, the general public are recommended to wear cloth coverings. Surgical and N-95 masks should be reserved for health care workers and medical first responders. In addition, all persons must wear masks in compliance with county orders, rules, and directives. You may find more information and resources from your county by visiting the website [here](#).

Several organizations and businesses are selling cloth coverings, and many may be purchased online. In addition, many organizations are distributing free masks, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided guidance on masks, including for making your own face covering. This guidance is available [here](#).

Q: Where can I find more information about county guidance and current emergency orders related to the coronavirus?

A: You may find the Governor's latest emergency proclamations related to the coronavirus [here](#). Please click [here](#) for more information on each county's plans and guidance.

Q: What is the status of contact tracing efforts in Hawaii, and can I volunteer to help?

A: Under the *Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act*, Hawaii received \$50 million for ramping up testing and contact tracing efforts.

If you are a health care professional and wish to volunteer for the COVID-19 response at this time, you may sign up for the Medical Reserve Corps [here](#).

Travel Testing

Q: What restrictions remain in place for air travel?

A: On October 15, 2020, the State of Hawaii implemented its Safe Travels Hawaii Program, which sets out the requirements for trans-Pacific travel, in addition to the requirements for travel between counties within the state. For quick facts on the Safe Travels Hawaii program, please click [here](#). For more information on travel generally, please visit the State's COVID-19 travel [website](#), or call 1-800-GOHAWAII (1-800-464-2924).

The counties of Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii may have additional testing requirement for travelers. Please contact the appropriate county office for more information: [County of Kaua'i](#), [County of Maui](#), and [County of Hawai'i](#).

Q: What is the State's Safe Travels program?

A: The State of Hawaii's Safe Travels program is a pre-travel testing program designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. For up-to-date information on the status and details of the Safe Travels program, please visit the website [here](#).

Insurance

Q: What if I have lost health insurance coverage through my employer?

A: If you no longer have coverage through your employer, you may be eligible for a special enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act Marketplace (healthcare.gov) or for Med-QUEST (<https://medquest.hawaii.gov/>).

Q: Are Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries now able to get 90-day supplies of their medication?

A: The *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* allows Medicare beneficiaries to get up to 90 days of a prescription if that is what their doctor prescribed, as long as there are no safety concerns. Medicaid policies about prescription drug refills are set according to each state, and you may find more information about Med-QUEST in Hawaii [here](#).

Q: Is the government subsidizing COBRA health insurance payments?

A: Currently, no. COBRA health insurance is critical in allowing employees who have lost their jobs to retain health care coverage for themselves and their families, but often COBRA payments are too expensive for many families. Please note that losing job-based health insurance is often considered a qualifying event in terms of securing new health coverage through a special enrollment period. You should visit the Affordable Care Act [Marketplace](#) to determine if you are eligible for a special enrollment period, or the Med-Quest [website](#) to determine if you are eligible for Med-Quest.

Q: What options are available for telehealth services?

A: The *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* includes a provision from my bill, the *CONNECT for Health Act of 2019 (S. 2741)*, that allows the Department of Health and Human Services to waive any restriction on telehealth under Medicare during the COVID-19 emergency period. Medicare beneficiaries in any part of the country, and in their homes, now have access to telehealth services. In addition, Governor Ige's emergency proclamations have provided for the waiver of licensure requirements. More information is available [here](#).

Nutrition

Q: How has the Emergency Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (COVID relief law) expanded existing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits?

A: The COVID relief law provides a temporary 15 percent increase in individual monthly SNAP into April.

Q: How do I apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits?

A: To apply for SNAP benefits in Hawaii, please check your [eligibility](#) and apply using the fillable form [here](#) through the Department of Human Services Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division. Once complete, you may print and sign your application and mail it to your local processing center, or you may add a digital signature to the page and email it to BESSD.StatewideBranch@dhs.hawaii.gov. Information on local processing centers is available [here](#).

The coronavirus stimulus check is not considered income for SNAP eligibility. You may find more information about whether financial assistance related to COVID-19 is, or is not, considered income for eligibility for related services and benefits [here](#)

Q: How long does it take to get benefits?

A: The Hawaii Department of Human Services has stated that there is currently a reduction in staff at the Hawaii processing centers in order to reduce exposure to the coronavirus, but they are working hard to manage the workload and provide timely processing of applications. Please call your local processing center if you have questions about your application. Information on local processing centers is available [here](#).

Q: How can I access food while I am waiting for my Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application to be approved?

A: Please check with your local food bank. The *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021* (COVID relief law) provides additional funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), including funds for storage and administration, to further support food banks and food pantries. [Hawaii Food Bank](#) operates distribution sites on Kauai and Oahu. [The Food Basket](#) serves Hawaii Island, and [Maui Food Bank](#) serves Maui.

Q: Are food delivery services available for seniors?

A: Yes, the *Older Americans Act* (OAA) nutrition programs ensure that seniors have access to meals. Similar to the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* and the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security* (CARES) Act, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021* (COVID relief law) provides additional funding and extends waivers for these programs. This includes additional funds for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program to provide food boxes to more senior citizens. OAA's Meals on Wheels provide home-delivered, pre-packaged meals to low-income seniors. In addition, there are organizations on each island that provide food assistance:

- [Honolulu](#): (808)768-7705
- [Hawaii](#): (808)961-8600
- [Maui/Molokai/Lanai](#): (808)270-7774
- [Kauai](#): (808)241-4470

Q: Is there a way to purchase groceries online using your Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)/ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card?

A: Yes, SNAP households in Hawaii may now participate in online purchasing. Currently, you can use your EBT card to make online purchases at eight Walmart locations in Hawaii. Food purchases you would normally buy with your SNAP EBT card-in person can now be purchased online for pickup curbside or home delivery. You can find out more about how to purchase food online at Walmart with your EBT card [here](#). If choosing the delivery option there is a fee of approximately \$20 per transaction. SNAP benefits cannot be used to cover the delivery fee. There is no minimum purchase when using either pickup or delivery options for those using their EBT card. Please see the information below for participating Walmart locations and specific information for pickup and home delivery.

| Store # | Address | City | State | Zip Code | Curbside | Delivery |
|---------|-----------------------|----------|-------|----------|------------------|----------|
| 3478 | 1032 Fort Street Mall | Honolulu | HI | 96813 | Not at this time | Yes |

| | | | | | | |
|------|------------------------|-------------|----|-------|------------------|-----|
| 2321 | 75-1015 Henry Street | Kailua-Kona | HI | 96740 | Not at this time | Yes |
| 2473 | 325 E. Makaala Street | Hilo | HI | 96720 | Not at this time | Yes |
| 2126 | 95-550 Lanikuhana Ave. | Mililani | HI | 96789 | Not at this time | Yes |
| 3149 | 700 Keeamoku Street | Honolulu | HI | 96814 | Not at this time | Yes |
| 3883 | 91-600 Farrington Hwy | Kapolei | HI | 96707 | Yes | Yes |
| 2314 | 94-595 Kupuohi Street | Waipahu | HI | 96797 | Not at this time | Yes |
| 5274 | 1131 Kuala Street | Pearl City | HI | 96782 | Yes | Yes |

Q: Is Walmart the only option for purchasing groceries online using your Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)/ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) card?

A: Walmart is currently the only grocer in Hawaii that can accept EBT card online purchases. The Hawaii Department of Human Services (DHS) is actively working to expand the service to more grocers. Current and future participating retailers can be found by visiting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) website [here](#). More information is also available from DHS [here](#).

Q: Are there options for flexibility of Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits during times when certain items are unavailable?

A: The *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* provides increased funding for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and allows new, temporary flexibilities to encourage social distancing and reduce in-person visits to the WIC clinic. Hawaii has been approved for the following:

- Waiver of the physical presence requirement for all individuals seeking certification or recertification in the WIC Program, including anthropometric and bloodwork requirements;
- Waiver of the requirement for in-person food instrument pick-up for certain participants;
- Flexibility in the food package requirements; and
- Waiver of medical documentation.

More information about WIC in Hawaii is available [here](#).

Q: How will school nutrition programs operate while schools are distance learning?

A: In addition to the U.S. Department of extending free meals through summer meal programs to all children for the entire 2020-2021 school year, the *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021* (COVID relief law) provides increased funding for school and child care meal programs. All children 18 years or younger are eligible for free meals, and parents or guardians are able to pick-up meals for their children at meal distribution sites. Please contact your child's school for more information about school meals.

Child Care

Q: What child care programs are available at this time?

A: The *Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021* (COVID relief law) provides an addition \$10 billion for grants for child providers. Through the *CARES Act* Hawaii previously received nearly \$12 million through the CCDBG. One resource with information about child care programs in Hawaii is available [here](#).