

## Important Information about COVID-19 and Research Participation

COVID-19 refers to the Coronavirus that is being spread across people in our communities. We need to provide you with important information about COVID-19, and to review ways in which your study participation might change because of COVID-19 related risk.

If you are considering joining our study or are currently enrolled in our study, it is important that you consider the following information to determine if study participation is right for you at this time.

**How is COVID-19 spread?** COVID-19 is a respiratory virus spread by respiratory droplets, mainly from person-to-person. This can happen between people who are in close contact from one another (about 6 feet). It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

**Can COVID-19 be prevented?** Current ways to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 include “social distancing” which is a practice to decrease the potential for direct exposure to others who may have been exposed to COVID-19, for example by avoiding large gatherings or refraining from shaking hands with others. It is important to understand that since study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased exposure to others within our research site it may increase your exposure to COVID-19. While there currently is no direct evidence that spending time in a health facility increases the risk of getting COVID-19, there might be a small increased risk.

**What are the risks of COVID-19?** For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. While we are still learning about this virus, the information we have right now suggests that the percentage of infected people who might die from the virus is about 3%.

**Who is most at risk?** Individuals over 60, individuals with weakened immune systems, individuals who may be pregnant, and those with chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes and lung disease have the highest rates of severe disease from the infection.

**Are there treatments available?** At this time there is no vaccination or proven treatment for the COVID-19 infection.

**How could your participation in this research change as a result of COVID-19?** There are several ways we try to minimize your risk. If possible, we limit the number of times you have to come to our research site. We ask every research participant if they have the symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with any cases. We screen all involved personnel for symptoms of COVID-19. We perform forehead temperature checks on every research participant and research team member before entering the lab. We reduce the time you are exposed to other people as much as possible. If you are suspected to be positive for COVID-19, there may be last minute changes to how research procedures are performed or cancellations of research tests or procedures to ensure your safety. It is even possible that our research study will be put on hold because of COVID-19.

The information related to risks of COVID-19 changes every day. Montana State University and state/local government health partners are monitoring these risks and deciding how these risks should change our research. If you have questions about COVID-19 and your participation in research, please consult with the study team at [msunutritionlab@gmail.com](mailto:msunutritionlab@gmail.com).