



COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)

FAQs

How do people become infected with COVID-19?

Human coronaviruses most commonly spread from an infected person to others through:

- Respiratory droplets released into the air by coughing and sneezing;
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands;
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands; and
- Rarely, fecal contamination.

It's not clear yet how easily COVID-19 spreads from person to person. Many of the patients in the pneumonia outbreak caused by COVID-19 in Wuhan, China had some link to a large seafood and live animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread is occurring. There is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with COVID-19, and investigations are ongoing.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

At this time, CDC believes that symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure. This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS coronaviruses.

How can I avoid infection with COVID-19?

The best way to prevent infection is to take precautions to avoid exposure to this virus, which are similar to the precautions you take to avoid the flu. CDC always recommends these everyday actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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.

What do I do if I think I may be infected with COVID-19?

If you are experiencing fever, cough or difficulty breathing, and have traveled to China or been exposed to a sick traveler from China in the last 14 days, you should contact your healthcare provider. **Be sure to call ahead before going to your doctor's office or emergency department to prevent any potential spread.**