CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How It Spreads

COVID-19 is a new disease and **we are still learning how it spreads**, the severity of illness it causes, and to what extent it may spread in the United States.

How COVID-19 Spreads

Person-to-person spread

The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Can someone spread the virus without being sick?

- People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest).
- Some spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

Spread from contact with contaminated surfaces or objects

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

How easily the virus spreads

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious (spread easily), like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, spreading continually without stopping.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community ("community spread") in some affected geographic areas.

Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

Situation in U.S.

Different parts of the country are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity. The United States nationally is currently in the initiation phases, but states where community spread is occurring are in the acceleration phase. The duration and severity of each phase can vary depending on the characteristics of the virus and the public health response.

- CDC and state and local public health laboratories are testing for the virus that causes COVID-19. View CDC's Public Health Laboratory Testing map.
- More and more states are reporting cases of COVID-19 to CDC.
- U.S. COVID-19 cases include:
  - Imported cases in travelers
  - Cases among close contacts of a known case
  - Community-acquired cases where the source of the infection is unknown.
- Three U.S. states are experiencing sustained community spread.
- View latest case counts, deaths, and a map of states with reported cases.

Latest Updates on this Outbreak

International Areas with Sustained (Ongoing) Transmission

Last updated March 17, 2020

- China (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- Iran (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- Most of Europe (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- South Korea (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- United Kingdom and Ireland (Level 3 Travel Health Notice)
- Global Outbreak Notice (Level 2 Travel Health Notice)

For additional information, please visit CDC's Travel Information page.

Related Links

- All COVID-19 Travel Health Notices
- COVID-19 Situation Summary

Page last reviewed: March 4, 2020
Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Checklist to Get Ready

Checklist for Individuals and Families

As a family, you can plan and make decisions now that will protect you and your family during a COVID-19 outbreak. Creating a household plan can help protect your health and the health of those you care about in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19 in your community. Use this checklist to help you take steps to plan and protect the health of you and your family.

PLAN AND PREPARE

Get up-to-date information about local COVID-19 activity from public health officials

Create a household plan of action.
- Consider members of the household that may be at greater risk such as older adults and people with severe chronic illnesses.
- Ask your neighbors what their plan includes.
- Create a list of local organizations you and your household can contact in case you need access to information, healthcare services, support, and resources.
- Create an emergency contact list including family, friends, neighbors, carpool drivers, healthcare providers, teachers, employers, the local public health department, and other community resources.
- Choose a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

Take everyday preventive actions:
- Wash your hands frequently
- 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 Be prepared if your child's school or childcare facility is temporarily dismissed or for potential changes at your workplace.

TAKE ACTION

TAKE ACTION

In case of an outbreak in your community, protect yourself and others:
- Stay home and speak to your healthcare provider if you develop fever, cough, or shortness of breath
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs*:
    - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse
    - Bluish lips or face
    - *This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.
- Keep away from others who are sick
- Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet)

Put your household plan into action
- Continue to practice everyday preventive actions
- If someone in the household is sick, separate them into the prepared room
- If caring for a household member, follow recommended precautions and monitor your own health
- Keep surfaces disinfected
- Avoid sharing personal items
- If you become sick, stay in contact with others by phone or email
- Stay informed about the local outbreak situation
- Notify your work if your schedule needs to change
- Take care of the emotional health of your household members, including yourself

Take additional precautions for those at highest risk, particularly older adults and those who have severe underlying health conditions.
- Consider staying at home and away from crowds if you or a family member are an older adult or have underlying health issues
- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick and limit close contact with others
- Practice good hand hygiene

Take the following steps to help protect your children during an outbreak:
- Notify your child's school if your child becomes sick with COVID-19
- Keep track of school dismissals in your community
- Discourage children and teens from gathering in other public places

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

How to Protect Yourself

! **Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions** like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Please consult with your health care provider about additional steps you may be able to take to protect yourself.

The President's Coronavirus Guidelines for America: 15 Days to Slow the Spread ⬜ ↗ Spanish ⬜

Know How it Spreads

- There is currently no vaccine to prevent coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).
- **The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.**
- The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.
  - Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
  - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Take steps to protect yourself

Clean your hands often

- **Wash your hands** often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, **use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.** Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth** with unwashed hands.

Avoid close contact

- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick

- Put **distance between yourself and other people** if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

Take steps to protect others

Stay home if you're sick

- **Stay home** if you are sick, except to get medical care. Learn what to do if you are sick.

Cover coughs and sneezes

- **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.

- **Throw used tissues** in the trash.

- Immediately **wash your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Wear a facemask if you are sick

- **If you are sick:** You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes, and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room. Learn what to do if you are sick.

- **If you are NOT sick:** You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.

Clean and disinfect

- **Clean AND disinfect** frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

- **If surfaces are dirty, clean them:** Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

To disinfect:
Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. Use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.

Options include:

- **Diluting your household bleach.**
  To make a bleach solution, mix:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water
      OR
    - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

  Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- **Alcohol solutions.**
  Ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.

- **Other common EPA-registered household disinfectants.**
  Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens 🅿️ [7 pages] ↗️ claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

More handwashing tips	Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings

More information

Symptoms	If someone in your house gets sick
What to do if you are sick	Frequently asked questions

Travelers

Individuals, schools, events, businesses and more

Healthcare Professionals

Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019

Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (ASL Version)

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Symptoms

📞 **Call your doctor:** If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.
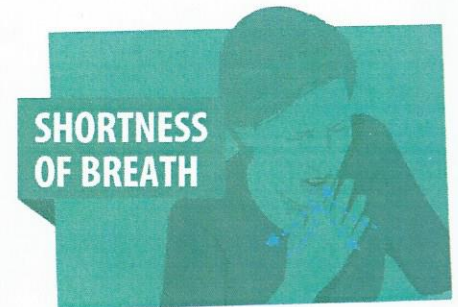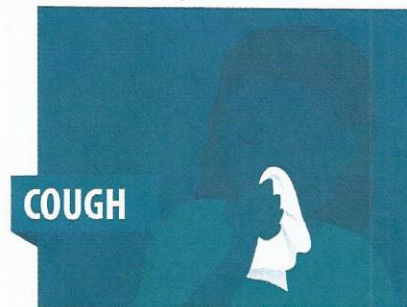
Watch for symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases.

The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure.***

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

*This is based on what has been seen previously as the incubation period of MERS-CoV viruses.

⚠ If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

| How to protect yourself | What to do if you are sick |

More information

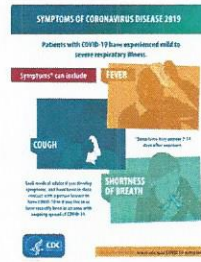|	
Travelers	Schools
Households	Businesses
Pregnant Women & Children	Healthcare Professionals
People Who are Sick	Health Departments
Caregivers	Laboratories

Stop the spread of germs

Printable Flyer

- English [1 page]
- Spanish [1 page]
- Chinese [1 page]
- Korean [1 page]
- Vietnamese [1 page]

What to do if you are sick

Printable Flyer

- English [1 page]
- Spanish [1 page]
- Chinese [1 page]
- Korean [1 page]
- Vietnamese [1 page]

Symptoms of Coronavirus 2019

Symptoms of Coronavirus 2019-ASL

Page last reviewed: March 20, 2020
Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Testing for COVID-19

Call your doctor: If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.

Coronavirus Self-Checker
A guide to help you make decisions and seek appropriate medical care

If you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19 or you are a resident in a community where there is ongoing spread of COVID-19 and develop symptoms of COVID-19, call your healthcare provider and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. They will decide whether you need to be tested, but keep in mind that there is no treatment for COVID-19 and people who are mildly ill may be able to isolate and care for themselves at home.

If you are at higher risk for serious illness

People at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider early, even if their illness is mild.

Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness.

If you are very sick get medical attention immediately

If you develop **emergency warning signs** for COVID-19 get **medical attention immediately**. Emergency warning signs include*:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

For healthcare professionals

For information on testing for healthcare professionals, see recommendations for reporting, testing, and specimen collection at Interim Guidance for Healthcare Professionals.

CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Reducing Stigma

Public health emergencies, such as the outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to social _stigma (1)_ toward people, places, or things. For example, stigma and discrimination can occur when people associate a disease, such as COVID-19, with a population or nationality, even though not everyone in that population or from that region is specifically at risk for the disease. Stigma can also occur after a person has been released from COVID-19 quarantine even though they are not considered a risk for spreading the virus to others.

Knowing and sharing Facts can help stop stigma

- Share facts about COVID-19
- COVID-19 FAQs

...on who is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 are not at greater risk of spreading COVID-19 than other Americans.

Some groups of people who may be experiencing stigma because of COVID-19 include:

- Persons of Asian descent
- People who have traveled
- Emergency responders or healthcare professionals

Stigma hurts everyone by creating fear or anger towards other people.

Stigmatized groups may be subjected to:

- Social avoidance or rejection
- Denials of healthcare, education, housing or employment
- Physical violence.

Stigma affects the emotional or _mental health (2)_ of stigmatized groups and the communities they live in. Stopping stigma is important to making communities and community members _resilient (3)_. See resources on mental health and coping during COVID-19.

Everyone can help stop stigma related to COVID-19 by knowing the facts and sharing them with others in your community.

Communicators and public health officials can help counter stigma during the COVID-19 response.

- Maintain privacy and confidentiality of those seeking healthcare and those who may be part of any contact investigation.
- Quickly communicate the risk or lack of risk from associations with products, people, and places.
- Raise awareness about COVID-19 without increasing fear.

- Share accurate information about how the virus spreads.

- Speak out against negative behaviors, including negative statements on social media about groups of people, or exclusion of people who pose no risk from regular activities.

- Be cautious about the images that are shared. Make sure they do not reinforce stereotypes.

- Engage with stigmatized groups in person and through media channels including news media and social media.

- Thank healthcare workers and responders. People who have traveled to areas where the COVID-19 outbreak is happening to help have performed a valuable service to everyone by helping make sure this disease does not spread further.

- Share the need for social support for people who have returned from China or are worried about friends or relatives in the affected region.

Key Terms

1. **Stigma** occurs when people associate a risk with a specific people, place, or thing – like a minority population group – and there is no evidence that the risk is greater in that group than in the general population. Stigmatization is especially common in disease outbreaks. (https://emergency.cdc.gov/cerc/cerccorner/article_123016.asp)

2. **Mental health** is defined by the World Health Organization as a state of well being in which a person realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response ☐).

3. **Resilience** is the ability to withstand and recover from stress. (https://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2017/08/predicting-community-resilience-and-recovery-after-a-disaster/)

Other Preparedness Resources

- Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones
- Pandemic Preparedness Resources

Page last reviewed: March 3, 2020
Content source: National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases (NCIRD), Division of Viral Diseases