Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and you

What is coronavirus disease 2019?
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

Can I get COVID-19?
Yes. COVID-19 is spreading from person to person in parts of the world. Risk of infection from the virus that causes COVID-19 is higher for people who are close contacts of someone known to have COVID-19, for example healthcare workers, or household members. Other people at higher risk for infection are those who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

Learn more about places with ongoing spread at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html#geographic.
The current list of global locations with cases of COVID-19 is available on CDC’s web page at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/geographic/locations-confirmed-cases.html.

How does COVID-19 spread?
The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but is now spreading from person to person. The virus is thought to spread mainly 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. It also 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. Learn what is known about the spread of newly emerged coronaviruses at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/transmission.html.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?
Some patients have pneumonia in both lungs, multi-organ failure and in some cases death.

People can help protect themselves from respiratory illness with everyday preventive actions.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If you are sick, to keep from spreading respiratory illness to others, you should

- 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 should I do if I recently traveled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19?
If you have traveled from an affected area, there may be restrictions on your movements for up to 2 weeks. If you develop symptoms during that period (fever, cough, trouble breathing), seek medical advice. Call the office of your health care provider before you go, and tell them about your travel and your symptoms. They will give you instructions on how to get care without exposing other people to your illness. While sick, avoid contact with people, don’t go out and delay any travel to reduce the possibility of spreading illness to others.

Is there a vaccine?
There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to prevent infection is to take everyday preventive actions, like avoiding close contact with people who are sick and washing your hands often.

Is there a treatment?
There is no specific antiviral treatment for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can seek medical care to help relieve symptoms.

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19
CERC in an Infectious Disease Outbreak

1. **Be First**: Quickly sharing information about a disease outbreak can help stop the spread of disease, and prevent and reduce illness and even death. People often remember the first information they hear in an emergency, so the first information they receive should come from health experts.
   - Even if the cause of the outbreak or specific disease is unknown, share facts that are available. This can help you stay ahead of possible rumors.
   - Share information about the signs and symptoms of disease, who is at risk, treatment and care options, and when to seek medical care.

2. **Be Right**: Accuracy establishes credibility. Information should include what is known, what is not known, and what is being done to fill in the information gaps.
   - Public health messages and medical guidance must complement each other. For example, public health officials should not widely encourage people to go to the doctors if doctors are turning people away and running out of medicine for critically ill people.
   - Always fact check with subject-matter experts. One incorrect message can cause harmful behaviors and may result in people losing trust in future messages.

3. **Be Credible**: Honesty, timeliness, and scientific evidence encourage the public to trust your information and guidance. Acknowledge when you do not have enough information to answer a question and then work with the appropriate experts to get an answer.
   - Do not make promises about anything that is not yet certain, such as distribution of vaccines or medications without confirmed availability.
   - Clinicians should be present at press or community events to answer medical questions.

4. **Express Empathy**: Disease outbreaks can cause fear and disrupt daily lives. Lesser-known or emerging diseases cause more uncertainty and anxiety. Acknowledging what people are feeling and their challenges shows that you are considering their perspectives when you give recommendations.
   - For example, during a telebriefing for the coronavirus disease 2019 response: “Being quarantined can be disruptive, frustrating, and feel scary. Especially when the reason for quarantine is exposure to a new disease for which there may be limited information.”

5. **Promote Action**: In an infectious disease outbreak, public understanding of and action on disease prevention is key to stopping the spread.
   - Keep action messages simple, short, and easy to remember, like “cover your cough.”
   - Promote action messages in different ways to make sure they reach those with disabilities, limited English proficiency, and varying access to information.

6. **Show Respect**: Respectful communication is particularly important when people feel vulnerable. Respectful communication promotes cooperation and rapport. Actively listen to the issues and solutions brought up by local communities and local leadership.
   - Acknowledge different cultural beliefs and practices about diseases, and work with communities to adapt behaviors and promote understanding.
   - Do not dismiss fears or concerns. Give people a chance to talk and ask questions.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response
GERMS are all around you.

Stay healthy.
Wash your hands.

www.cdc.gov/handwashing
CDC PROTECTS AND PREPARES COMMUNITIES

CDC is aggressively responding to the global outbreak of COVID-19 and community spread in the U.S.

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**Travel**
- Conducts outreach to travelers
- Issues travel notices

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**Laboratory and diagnostics**
- Develops diagnostic tests
- Confirms all positive test results submitted by states

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**Schools**
- Provides guidance for schools including school closures and online education options

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**Businesses**
- Provides business guidance including recommendations for sick leave policies and continuity of operations

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**Community members**
- Shares information on symptoms and prevention
- Provides information on home care
- Encourages social distancing

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**Healthcare professionals**
- Develops guidance for healthcare professionals
- Conducts clinical outreach and education

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**Healthcare systems**
- Develops preparedness checklists for health systems
- Provides guidance for PPE supply planning, healthcare system screening, and infection control
- Leverages existing telehealth tools to redirect persons to the right level of care

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**Health departments**
- Assesses state and local readiness to implement community mitigation measures
- Links public health agencies and healthcare systems

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[cdc.gov/COVID19]
KEEP CALM AND WASH YOUR HANDS

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Know the facts about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and help stop the spread of rumors.

**FACT 1**
Diseases can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity.

People of Asian descent, including Chinese Americans, are not more likely to get COVID-19 than any other American. Help stop fear by letting people know that being of Asian descent does not increase the chance of getting or spreading COVID-19.

**FACT 2**
Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19.

People who have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or people who live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread are at an increased risk of exposure.

**FACT 3**
Someone who has completed quarantine or has been released from isolation does not pose a risk of infection to other people.

For up-to-date information, visit CDC’s coronavirus disease 2019 web page.

**FACT 4**
You can help stop COVID-19 by knowing the signs and symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
Seek medical advice if you
- Develop symptoms
AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

**FACT 5**
There are simple things you can do to help keep yourself and others healthy.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)
STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

cdc.gov/COVID19
WASH YOUR HANDS!

1. Wet
2. Get Soap
3. Scrub
4. Rinse
5. Dry

Hands that look clean can still have icky germs!