Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Q. What are coronaviruses?
A: Human coronaviruses were first identified in the mid-1960s. They are a respiratory virus named for the crown-like spikes on their surface. We are currently aware of seven different types of human coronaviruses, four of which are associated with mild to moderate upper-respiratory tract illnesses, like the common cold. Other types of the virus include severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV), the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), and the new novel corona virus, SARS-CoV-2, which is responsible for the latest outbreak. Although COVID-19 is similar to the other types of coronaviruses, it is unique and we are still learning more about it every day.

Q. How do you get infected with COVID-19?
A: COVID-19 is the disease caused by the spread of SARS-CoV-2, which is transmitted through contact with the virus. It can be spread by droplets from a cough or sneeze, which can get into your mouth, nose, eyes, or lungs, or by contact with contaminated surfaces.

Q. How do I know if I have COVID-19?
A: If you have the following symptoms you may have COVID-19:
- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- sore throat
- headache
- chills
- repeated shaking with chills
- loss of taste or smell
- muscle pain

Depending on how widespread cases are in your community, your healthcare provider may recommend you be tested for the virus. When speaking with a healthcare provider be sure to note your symptoms or if you were exposed to a person diagnosed with the virus.

Q. How severe is this illness?
A: The World Health Organization says 80% of people with COVID-19 have a mild form of the illness with cold- or flu- like symptoms. The people most likely to get seriously ill from this virus are people over 60 and/or those with pre-existing health conditions. It is estimated that for every 100 cases of COVID-19, between two and four people would die. This is very different from a coronavirus like SARS, where nearly ten in 100 sick people died from the illness.

Q. What type of mask should I be wearing when I am in public?
A: CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery store, pharmacy).

Face coverings may help prevent spread of the virus from people who aren't showing symptoms to others. Children under the age of two and people with a history of breathing problems are not encouraged to wear a mask at this time.

Q. What can I do to prevent getting sick from COVID-19 or spreading it to others?
A: The following tips will help to prevent COVID-19 as well as other respiratory viruses:
- Stay home. It is recommended that everyone stay home and only leave the house to fulfill essential responsibilities (e.g., grocery store, pharmacy).
- Wear a mask if you leave your home or are assisting family with COVID-19.
- 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 with at least 60% alcohol.
- Don’t touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are showing symptoms of illness.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow. Throw the tissue in the garbage and make sure to clean your hands afterwards.
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Spreads

- Through close personal contact with a sick person.
- Contact with contaminated surfaces or objects.
- Through droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze.

Symptoms

Call your healthcare provider if you experience the following:

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- sore throat
- headache
- chills/repeated shaking with chills
- loss of taste or smell
- muscle pain

Seek immediate medical attention if you have:

- trouble breathing
- persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- new confusion or inability to arouse
- bluish lips or face

Prevention

- Stay home.
- If essential to go into a public setting, wear a mask and try to maintain six feet between yourself and other people.
- Wash your hands often. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue. Throw tissue away and clean hands.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces often.

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