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Coronavirus – COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a disease caused by a coronavirus, which is a small germ (too small to see without a microscope), that can spread between people. COVID-19 causes flu-like symptoms such as a dry cough, shortness of breath, fever, weakness and body aches. COVID-19 mostly affects the respiratory system. While most infections are not dangerous, it can cause pneumonia (a serious infection of the lungs) and can be deadly in severe cases.

How does coronavirus spread?

Coronavirus enters your body through the mouth, nose, and eyes when an infected person breathes, coughs, or sneezes on you or on surfaces you touch, and you then touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Most people start feeling sick about 5 days after getting infected, but coronavirus can live in the body for 2 to 14 days before signs of illness appear. And some people, especially children, can be infected but have no signs of illness. So people can have coronavirus and not know it, and transmit the virus to others. Coronavirus can live on some surfaces and objects for at least 3 days, and possibly longer. It spreads easily through contact.

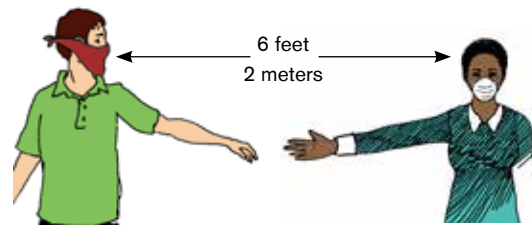


Who does coronavirus infect?

Anyone can get coronavirus. If you get it and recover, it isn't yet known whether you can get infected again. Adults more than 45 years old, especially the elderly, and people who already have respiratory illnesses, diabetes, heart problems, and weakened immune systems, are at greater risk to get COVID-19 and experience more severe effects.

How can you prevent infection?

Currently there is no vaccine or specific medicine for coronavirus. Coronavirus is not killed by antibiotics or home remedies. **Keep your distance from others, wear masks when outside the home, and clean your hands and shared surfaces often to avoid COVID-19.** Without a vaccine, stopping coronavirus from spreading is the only way to protect your community.



Staying away from others and wearing a mask protects you. When everyone wears masks, fewer people will get sick with COVID-19.

- **Wear a mask:** Wearing a mask or other face covering in public helps keep you safe. Wear a cloth or a paper mask that is clean, dry, covers your mouth and nose completely, and try not to touch it. Because a person can be infected without knowing it, wearing a simple cloth mask can stop people from infecting others when everyone uses one. Using a face covering may be hot or uncomfortable. Just as health workers get used to them, we can too, in order to keep loved ones and ourselves safe.
- **Keep 2 meters (6 feet) away** from people outside your household.
- **Wash your hands frequently** with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand-rub.
 - » Wash vigorously with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure to clean the entire hand, beneath fingernails, wrist, and lower arm.
 - » Always wash hands when returning home, after using the bathroom, before meals, and after you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose. Avoid touching your face without first washing your hands.

- **Clean surfaces (such as countertops, doorknobs, etc.) that have coronavirus on them, using alcohol or bleach disinfectants:**

- » **Alcohol:** Isopropyl alcohol in a 70% concentration will kill the coronavirus germ quickly. Use it to clean surfaces such as countertops, doorknobs, and equipment. A 60% to 70% solution works best; do not use 100% because it needs water to kill germs. If your alcohol is 100%, add water in a ratio of 1 cup water to 2 cups alcohol. First clean with soap and water, then clean with the alcohol solution and let it air dry.
- » **Bleach:** Bleach usually comes in a 5% solution. Add cold water (hot water will not work) to dilute it. For floors and large surfaces, use 2 cups bleach in a 5 gallon bucket of water (500 ml bleach in 20 liters water). To make smaller amounts, use 3 tablespoons bleach in 4 cups water (50 ml bleach in 1 liter water). First clean with soap and water, then clean with the bleach solution and let it air dry.
- » **Clean objects** that you handle frequently with disinfectants.
- » **Wash clothing and cloth masks** with laundry soap and hot water, if possible. If your washing machine has a pre-rinse cycle, be sure to use it. If washing clothes by hand, wash thoroughly, use plenty of soap, and dry in sunlight.

Limit physical contact with other people

If you think there is coronavirus in your area, stay at home. Avoid people other than those you live with. All of you should avoid contact with others. Try to stay away from crowded areas where you might come into close contact with people and contaminated surfaces which can spread coronavirus.

This can be both difficult to do and emotionally depressing. Limiting contact does not have to mean total isolation: Talk with people on the phone instead of in person. Talk with people through windows and doors. Talk with others in person by standing two meters (six feet) apart.

If you are healthy, help others in your community who are ill or most threatened by the virus due to age, disability, etc., by arranging for them to get food, clean water, and supplies without leaving their homes.



- **Use a mask when caring for a sick person** if the person might have coronavirus. N95 respirator masks give the best protection. If using a cloth mask, use one with 2 to 3 layers. To use a mask properly:

- » Clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, then cover your mouth and nose with the mask, making sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask.
- » Do not touch the mask while wearing it, and replace it with a new one if it becomes damp.
- » To remove the mask, use its straps to take it off (don't touch the mask itself). If you are discarding it, put it in a closed bin, and clean your hands.
- » It is best not to reuse masks. If you must reuse an N95 respirator mask, bake it at 160°F (72°C) for 30 minutes to disinfect it. Or, if you have at least 5, put each in a separate bag and rotate their use so you only use each mask once every 5 days.

- **Monitor your health.** If you have a dry cough, difficulty breathing, chest pain or pressure, and a fever, first call your doctor or the local health official for instruction about how and where to get treatment. Because the most serious danger from COVID-19 is inability to breathe, treatment for severe cases will include oxygen and a mechanical ventilator, available only in health care facilities.