

## COVID-19: What You Need to Know

### What is novel coronavirus?

A novel coronavirus is a new coronavirus that has not been previously identified. The virus causing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is not the same as the coronaviruses that commonly circulate among humans and cause mild illness, like the common cold. Patients with COVID-19 will be evaluated and cared for differently than patients with common coronavirus diagnosis.

### Why is the disease being called coronavirus disease 2019, COVID-19?

On February 11, 2020 the [World Health Organization](#) announced an official name for the disease that is causing the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak, first identified in Wuhan China. The new name of this disease is coronavirus disease 2019, abbreviated as COVID-19. In COVID-19, 'CO' stands for 'corona,' 'VI' for 'virus,' and 'D' for disease. Formerly, this disease was referred to as "2019 novel coronavirus" or "2019-nCoV".

### How does the virus spread?

This virus was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The first infections were linked to a live animal market, but the virus is now spreading from person-to-person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community in some affected geographic areas.

### Am I at risk for COVID-19 in the United States?

This is a rapidly evolving situation and the risk assessment may change daily. The latest updates are available on the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#).

### What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Call your healthcare professional if you develop symptoms and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19, or if you have recently traveled from an [area with widespread or ongoing community spread of COVID-19](#).

## How can I help protect myself?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, the [CDC](#) always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- 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 using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask: They recommend that healthy people do not wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, but rather facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

## What is the CDC doing about COVID-19?

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation and CDC will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available. CDC works 24/7 to protect people's health. Visit their website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for the latest updates.

It is also important to check with your state health department, which works with the CDC to monitor and implement all recommendations.

- For all that you need to know, including travel advisories, go to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>
- For specific questions, see the CDC's FAQ section: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>
- To find information about coronavirus in your state, search your state's health department: <https://bit.ly/2SBRR62>

*Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), retrieved March 3, 2020 from <https://www.cdc.gov>.*